FRANK MILLER'S

DARK KNIGHT

A CONVERSATION WITH
BOB KANE
ABOUT CREATING BATMAN

BATMAN'S FORGOTTEN
CO-CREATOR
BILL FINGER
HIS SON SHARES
THE SAD SECRETS

WHERE IS HE NOW – ?
BURT WARD
TV'S ROBIN REMINISCES

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

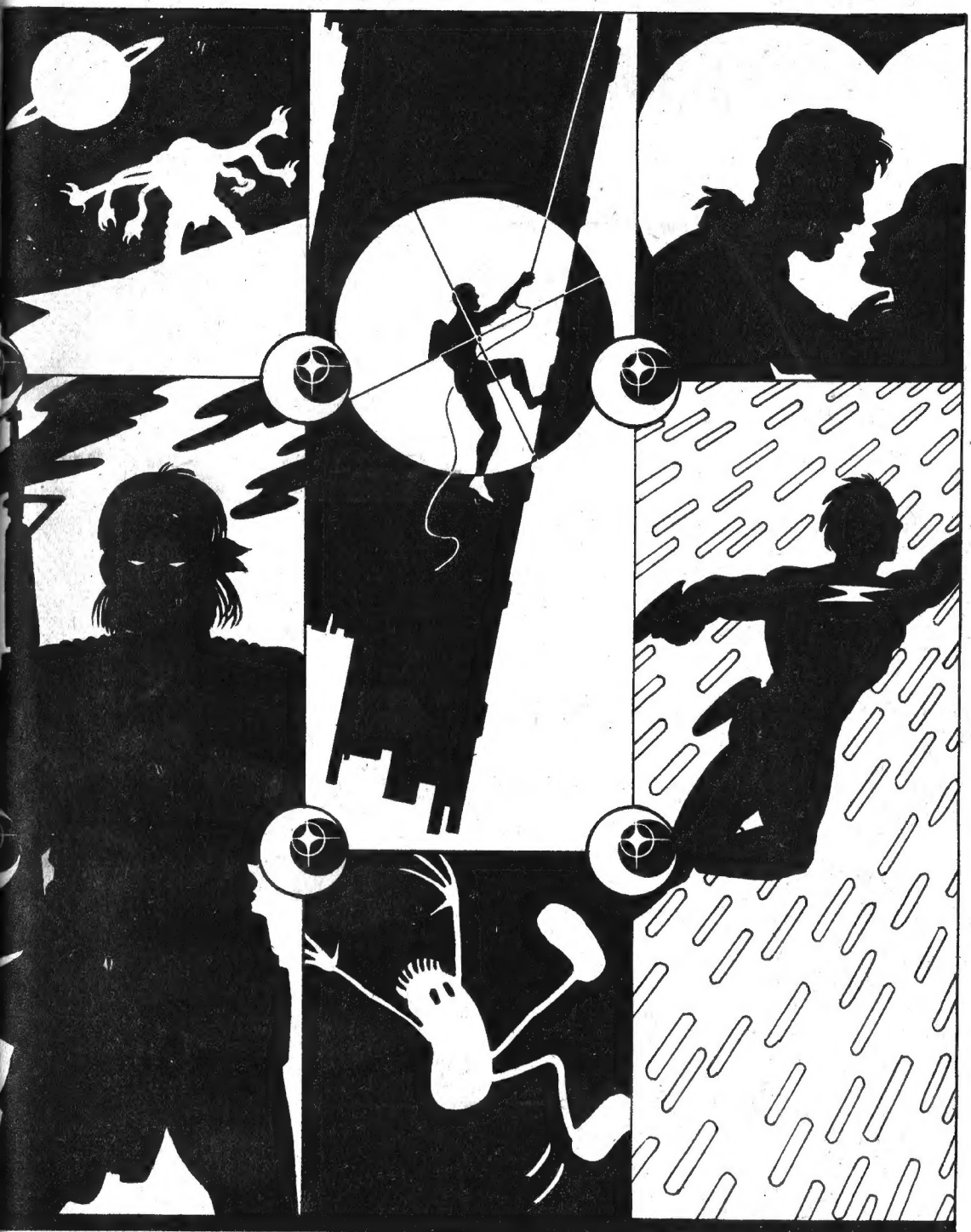
#31

$2.95 $3.75 CANADA

Cis
Characters TM & © 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

A FICTIONEER PUBLICATION

Ad © 1986 Eclipse Comics. All characters © 1986 their respective owners.

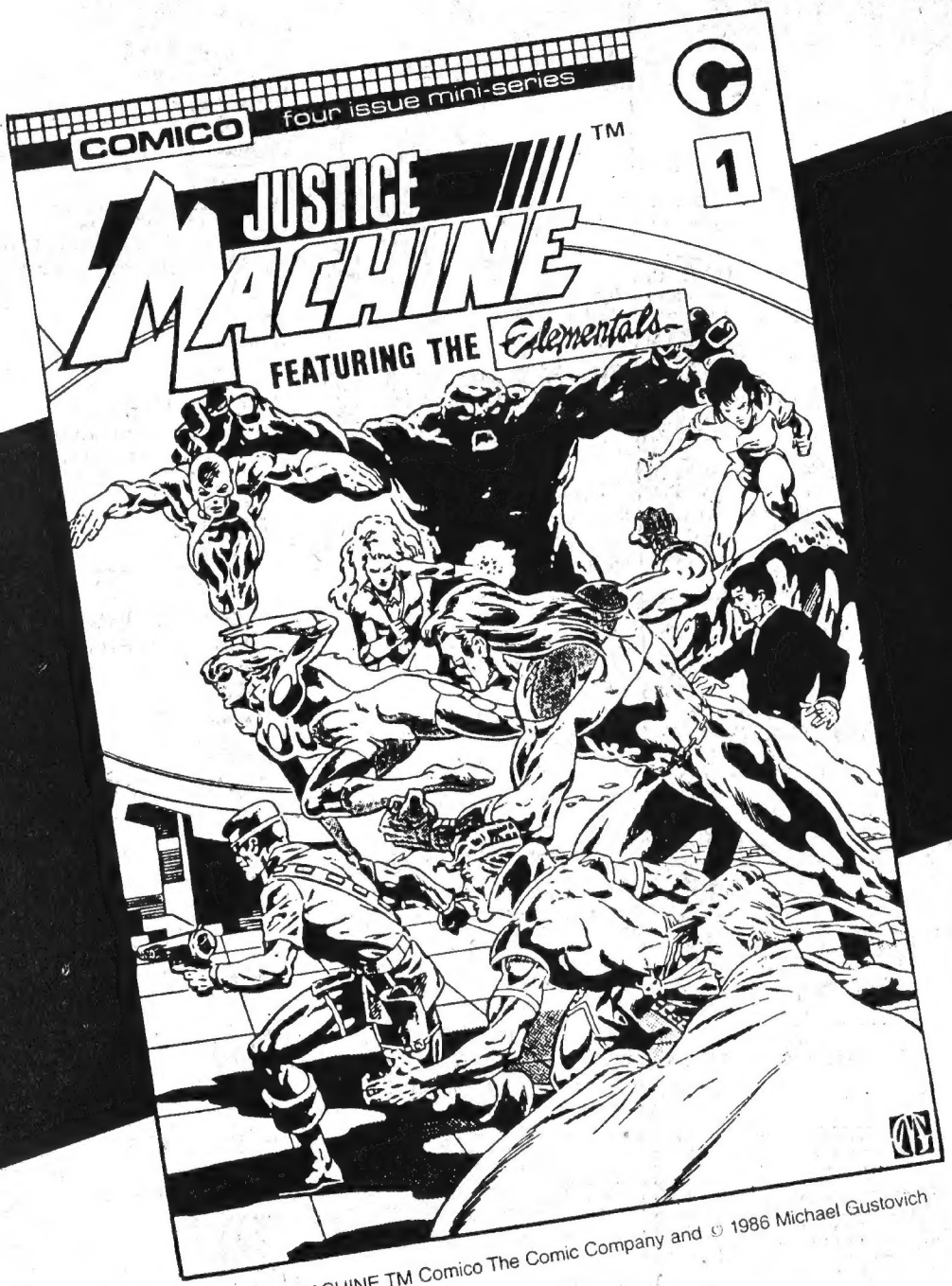


ECLIPSE COMICS™

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME.

HE MASKED MAN • ALIEN ENCOUNTERS • SCOUT • CROSSFIRE • TALES OF THE BEANWORLD • TRUE LOVE • ZOT! .....

AN EVENT IN COMIC BOOK HISTORY



JUSTICE MACHINE TM Comico The Comic Company and © 1986 Michael Gustovich

Don't miss it, on sale in MAY!

CREDITS

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S COMICS INTERVIEW

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT
editor/publisher

conceived by:
JIM SALICRUP
editorial and design consultant

MARK BORAX
managing editor

LESLEY BENJAMIN-AULL
editor emeritus

MARK GRUENWALD
DAN HAGEN
TONY TOLLIN
DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN
contributing editors

RICK JAGUS
typesetting

BILL BLACK
DARRYL BOATZ
BRUCE BRISTOW
SYLVIA GARTHWAITE GRIFFIN
CAROL KALISH
PEGGY MAY
LOU MOUGIN
ED O'NEAL
STEVE RINGGENBERG
STEVE SAFFEL
TIM TURNER
MARK WAID
special thanks

MARTIN W. HERZOG
canadian correspondent

PEEPS FOR KEEPS
supervisor

David Anthony Kraft's **COMICS INTERVIEW #31** 1986. Published monthly by Fictioneer Books Ltd., Suite 301, 234 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10001.

Copyright© 1986 Fictioneer Books Ltd. All rights reserved.
SUBSCRIPTIONS: $24 for twelve issues. CANADA, MEXICO & FOREIGN (U.S. funds only): $30 for twelve.
Any statements made in this magazine, express or implied, are solely those of the individuals being interviewed and do *not* represent the editorial position of the publisher, who accepts no responsibility for such statements.

cover contributed by:
FRANK MILLER
art
LYNN VARLEY
colors

CONTENTS

Art: Jim Salicrup

UP FRONT

You are holding what I believe is an important volume of comics history — the story, told mostly by primary sources, of the origins of The Batman.

Like the fictional origins of so many of comics most vital characters, the true-life tales of Batman's creators are passionate and tempestuous and do not always agree.

But, then, ask three eyewitnesses at the scene of a crime to describe exactly what transpired, and you are likely to get three different stories — each of them true in its own way, and yet none of them the whole story.

Taken together, however, the oral accounts of the early days of the Darknight Detective offer a rare and rich glimpse of the dawn of the Golden Age of Comics, an era rapidly receding from us, so different — and yet *not* so very different — from today.

To my delight, I am also privileged to offer interviews with Burt Ward and Frank Miller. It may seem unusual to mention them in the same breath, but each represents a redefinition of the character and concept of The Batman. Their presence in this issue of COMICS INTERVIEW ties it all together, helps complete the sense of history and provide a perspective spanning nearly five decades.

This may be the best issue of COMICS INTERVIEW yet.

Until next issue, at least.

-Dave

EDITORIAL:
UP FRONT
a rap with *dak*
5

WRITER:
FRED FINGER
remembers one of comics forgotten forefathers to *dwight jon zimmerman*
7

ARTIST:
BOB KANE
and *dwight jon zimmerman* turn the clock a half-century back to the birth of batman
16

ARTIST:
JERRY ROBINSON
tells his tales of times past to *tony tollin*
31

ARTIST:
GEORGE ROUSSOS
offers info on the early days to *mark gruenwald*
36

SPOTLIGHT:
DARK KNIGHT
miller expounds on his magnum opus
38

FAN ON THE SCREEN:
BURT WARD
tells *dan hagen* what it's really like to parade around in tights
54

LETTERS:
THE LAST WORD
lo! the readers speak!
61

NOW IS THE TIME!

EB'NN™ ...The story continues!

RALPH SNARF Adventures™

SYPHONS™ In Full Color!

VECTOR™ Color Comics with Computer Graphics!

EVERYWHERE THIS SUMMER

"Kane and my father came up with Batman."

© 1974 National Periodical Publications.

FRED FINGER

If Bob Kane represents the pinnacle of comic-book fame and success, then Bill Finger must represent its nadir. Though the co-creator of Batman, Bill never achieved anything close to the acclaim and fortune Kane did. Ultimately, Bill died penniless, broken, and virtually forgotten by an industry he was so instrumental in building.

Why did this happen? How could the man who according to Kane created such definitive villains as the Joker, Two-Face, the Penguin and Catwoman, and such distinctive stories which detailed the warping and abuse of the human spirit, allow himself to come to such an end?

It is a measure of how forgotten and ignored Bill Finger has been that when I worked on his article for the DC tribute, THE FIFTY WHO MADE DC GREAT, he proved to be the most difficult to find anything substantial about — and, as for a photo, not even a snapshot existed in DC's files.

It was only after the deadline had long passed that I got my breakthrough. An address was passed to me — that of Bill's son, Fred Finger, who fortunately lived in New York City. It may have been too late to get Fred to talk about his father for the project, but there was still time for a photo. Fred graciously agreed to do what he could to help, though he could only provide three small snapshots. One was a beach scene (ultimately used), the second was too poorly exposed for publication purposes, and the third, which showed Bill holding, and surrounded by, comics he had written, was mutilated beyond use. I quickly realized that even if Fred's words about his father couldn't be included in the DC project, a forum still existed — COMICS INTERVIEW. Fred thought over my suggestion of an interview about his father, agreed to it, and an appointment was made to meet him at his loft for dinner.

What a dinner it was! Fred is an incredibly talented self-taught professional chef who created a masterpiece of a chicken dinner with all the fixings. And the conversation was equal to the meal. Fred's depth of intelligence, wit and self-awareness, were not only a treat, they were a reminder of how rare such commodities are, and how truly lucky one is when they are all found in one person.

This interview is about Bill Finger, as told by his son. It is a fascinating and often incredible tale. And it is also not a pretty one.

DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN: *When were you first aware of what your father was doing?*

FRED FINGER: Writing comics? Ever since I can remember.

DWIGHT: *What was your first memory about that?*

FRED: Probably when I was under four. Even though they say you're not supposed to remember too much before the age of four, I do have some memories about it. The main problem is that my parents separated when I was four-and-a-half so I wasn't too sure what it was all about. But I would stay with Bill on the weekends and he would be up all

"My father developed the history of Batman."

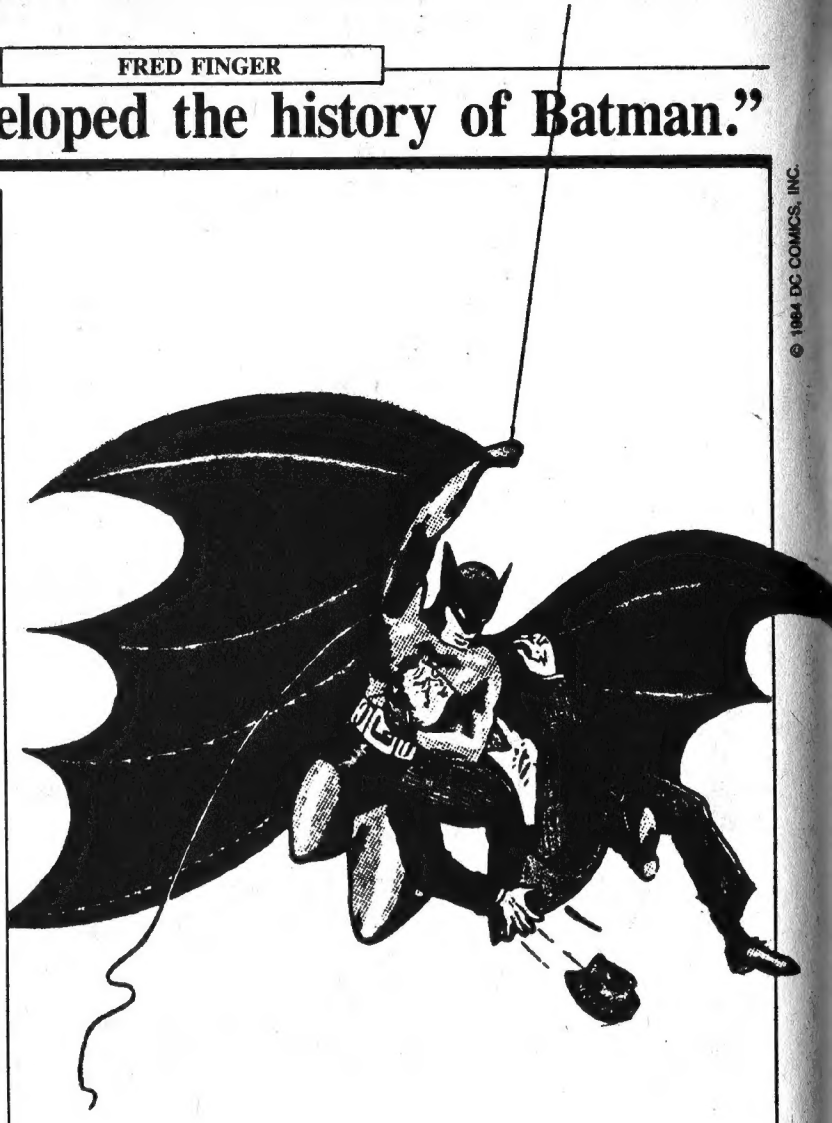
night, and I'd hear the typewriter going all night and then in the morning there'd be a stack of white originals and yellow carbons. And when I got to be an age where I could read, he'd ask me to read them so that he could get an idea of what a child's response to a story would be — you know, if it made sense from a kid's-eye-view. And if I found them too confusing, I would try and work it out with him so that it would come down to something that a fairly sophisticated child could get the grasp of. But I guess I always knew that he was writing comics — mainly because there were always stacks and stacks of comic books around the house, so I never had a want for buying a comic book. I didn't really know too much about what was going on at National in those days — the business side of it all or anything like that — I just knew that my father was crazy because he would be typing until three or four o'clock in the morning all the time in order to get something in by Monday . . . which, in subsequent years, I found out was supposed to be due the previous Monday. But that was my father — he was a great procastinator.

DWIGHT: *What was your father's method of working?*

FRED: Brainstorming. He would come back from the office with a premise for a story and he had an incredible collection of articles and this and that from magazines and books and stuff that he had been collecting a long time.

DWIGHT: *Yeah, I heard he had quite a morgue.*

FRED: God, yeah. I mean there was a file on birds . . . anything to do with birds — nicknames for birds, bird calls, how bird calls are done — anything. Or card tricks — anything that could relate to major villains — Batman villains, because mainly that was what he was involved in. And he'd come back from the office and say, all right, they want a story about the Penguin doing something weird with a bird show and some exotic birds doing this, that and the next thing . And then he'd go through his files and then we'd go Saturday to the Museum of Natural History and walk around the museum for hours. And me, I was just interested in going and looking at dinosaurs and having a good time and looking at the rocks and minerals and the stuff that interested me. Meanwhile, we'd end up in the bird hall and Bill would be walking around very silently looking at all the bird exhibits and meditating on things that he wanted to use as elements in the story. And then we'd go back to the house after going to the museum and movies and dinner and all the things that divorced fathers do with their kids — and lo! and behold, there'd be a story the next day — clackety, clackety, clack all night long. And that's basically how he did it. Or he'd call up a couple of friends of his and they'd come over and they'd sit around and have a few drinks and sit and talk — and maybe a couple artists would come over and they'd do some quick sketches and play around with ideas and then there'd be a story.



© 1984 DC COMICS, INC.

DWIGHT: *When were you born?*

FRED: I was born in 1948, so we're talking early '50s.

DWIGHT: *Did your father tell you how Batman was created?*

FRED: Yeah. Now this is the truth according to my mother, **Portia Finger**. Bill was a young kid, whenever it was — '37 — and he met **Bob Kane** at a cocktail party in the Bronx — and he was a shoe salesman — and Bob was a fledgling artist/comic book writer, whatever he was doing in those days. And he and Bill were talking about science fiction and things because they were both into reading science fiction a lot. And Bill had wanted to be an artist. He was a so-so sculptor, not-so-hot draftsman, but he was very creative from what I understand and they just started chatting and brainstorming ideas and Bob was working on a character, Batman, and he really didn't have too much of a concept *yet* of what he wanted him to look like or any kind of a history for this human being. He just wanted to come up with a character.

DWIGHT: *Did the character have a name at the time?*

FRED: I think it was "The Bat" originally. And there was a problem with that because there had been a movie made with **Bela Lugosi** called THE BAT and people already had this connotation of evil — and they didn't want that. They wanted the idea of the Batman to come across as a hero, sort of a lefthanded hero — which he was for many years, initially. He did not work closely with

"When Bill died...DC wasn't interested."

© 1956 National Periodical Publications

the police the first couple of years — he was a vigilante.

So Bob had this idea, sort of a rough concept, and Bill had a lot of ideas about what he wanted to do with the story — he thought "Oh, great, I'll write a story — I've never done this before." And they came up with the initial Batman story. And after that they had to figure out who this character was — and *why* he is.

DWIGHT: *How about the costume?*

FRED: The costume originally for Batman was a very stiff costume, one that would not work well at all. The cape wasn't a cape, it was wings — you can't get through the door with stiff wings. And the logistics of it was that if this man were on a rope, swinging, the wind would carry him in the wrong direction if the wings were stiff. The colors were diferent, he had a full-face mask instead of the cowl. It was diamond-shaped. He looked more like a cat than he did a bat.

DWIGHT: *Did you ever see the illustration or the description?*

FRED: Sometime ago I saw one of the original drawings in a book — and I can't remember what book — but it was very different from what Batman developed into by the time he reached his classic phase in the '40s. It's really hard on a lot of this because this all happened before I was born. You know, I never met **Bob Kane**.

DWIGHT: *You mentioned the fact that you had your father's files for awhile.*

FRED: I did. I had them when Bill died and I had to clean out his apartment and it was huge — it was enough to fill a standard file cabinet. And I called National and I said, "Look, I've got all of this stuff here." (This was when Bill died in '73 or '74 — I'm getting a little vague in my old age, too, I'm not too sure), and no one was interested up in the office and I couldn't imagine why. I figured there must be new writers up there who would be interested in all of this information about developing characters and why things in Batman stories happened the way they did — no interest at all. And it wasn't like I was trying to sell it to them or anything, I just felt that someone should pick up the option on these things because they were interesting. I was sitting there rereading them when I was a kid. I'd sit and go through his files because there was interesting stuff in there.

DWIGHT: *Did your father say exactly what he contributed to the Batman in the older version?*

FRED: He developed the costume, he developed the history of Batman — why he turned to fighting crime; the death of Bruce Wayne's parents; how could somebody do this and not have to work — so they had to make him into a very wealthy man; all of the gimicks that you think about with Batman — the Batarang, the Batcave, the Batmobile, the Bat Signal — all this stuff came out of my father's little fertile imagination.

BATMAN AND ROBIN
IN AN HONORED SPACE IN THE BAT-CAVE'S FAMED TROPHY ROOM HANGS A STRANGE YET OOPLY FAMILIAR GARB--THE COSTUME OF ANOTHER BATMAN! IMPOSSIBLE, YOU SAY?-- BRUCE WAYNE IS THE ONE AND ONLY... THE ORIGINAL BATMAN! WELL... HE IS-- AND HE ISN'T! READ ON, AND YOU'LL LEARN THE ASTONISHING ANSWER TO THIS PARADOX--READ ON, AND YOU'LL LEARN THE INSIDE STORY OF...
THE FIRST BATMAN
THERE IT IS, ROBIN-- THE COSTUME OF A BATMAN WHO FOUGHT CRIME EVEN BEFORE I STARTED MY OWN CAREER AS A CRIME-FIGHTER!
STORY: BILL FINGER
BOB KANE

Fred's father's tale of Bruce Wayne's father — the first Batman.

DWIGHT: *How about the villains?*

FRED: The villains. The Joker springs most to mind as Batman's greatest rival. He and Bob were trying to come up with the idea of a really off-beat villain and the character for the Joker was developed but he still didn't have a face. And out in Coney Island there used to be Lunar Park and the Steeple Chase and the Steeple Chase had this huge face painted over the entrance. And they were out at Coney Island, just ya-ya-ing around and Bill said, "That's the face, that's the face!" — and that's how the Joker's face came.

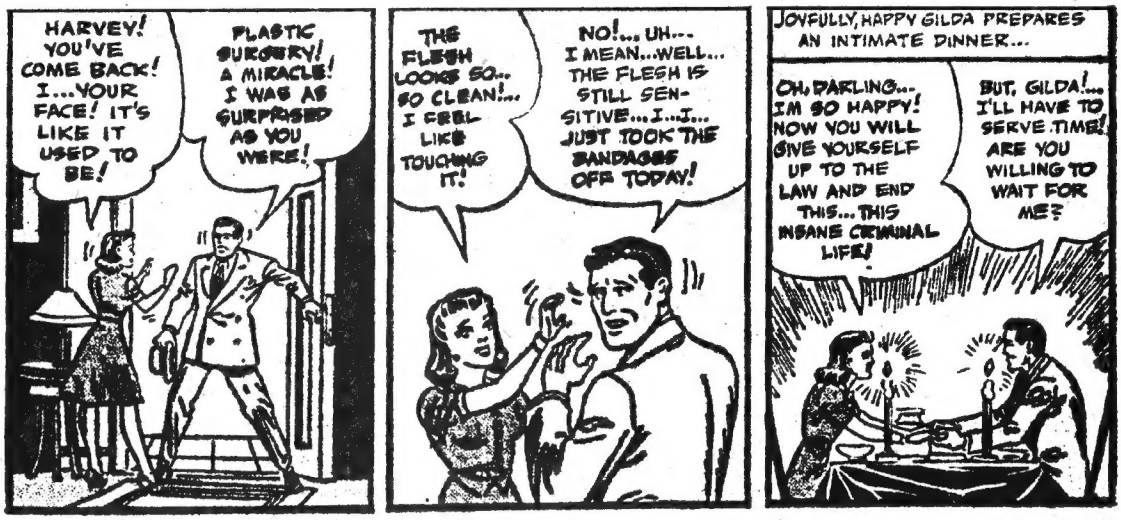
DWIGHT: *What you just said is very different from that version in which, basically, Jerry Robinson maintains that he helped create the Joker — that the Joker's face actually came out of a playing card, a Joker...*

FRED: That's possible, too. I've looked at a lot of card decks in my time and I have never seen a face like that Joker on any playing card. Maybe they made different playing cards in the '40s but Tally-ho's still look the same now as they did when I was a kid and I'm sure they looked the same 20 years before that.

DWIGHT: *Your father only used Tally-ho's?*

FRED: Well I don't know — Tally-ho's, Bykes, whatever. Basically, those are all trademarked jokers and have been copyrighted since the '20s, because I know that American playing cards have not changed, basically. But the face on the Steeple Chase was very distinctive — it was a totally maniacal face and it was a white-faced evil clown. It did not have a smile, it had a leer.

"Two-Face came out of Jekyll and Hyde."


HARVEY! YOU'VE COME BACK! I...YOUR FACE! IT'S LIKE IT USED TO BE!
PLASTIC SURGERY! A MIRACLE! I WAS AS SURPRISED AS YOU WERE!
THE FLESH LOOKS SO... SO CLEAN!... I FEEL LIKE TOUCHING IT!
NO!... UH... I MEAN...WELL... THE FLESH IS STILL SENSITIVE...I...I... JUST TOOK THE BANDAGES OFF TODAY!
JOYFULLY, HAPPY GILDA PREPARES AN INTIMATE DINNER...
OH, DARLING... I'M SO HAPPY! NOW YOU WILL GIVE YOURSELF UP TO THE LAW AND END THIS... THIS INSANE CRIMINAL LIFE!
BUT, GILDA!... I'LL HAVE TO SERVE TIME! ARE YOU WILLING TO WAIT FOR ME?

44 years before Frank Miller tried it in DARK KNIGHT, Bill Finger wrote this jarring sequence of the disfigured man's 'return to normalcy.'

DWIGHT: *What about the Conrad Veidt aspect?*

FRED: I think the **Conrad Veidt** aspect was how the Joker physically looked: The *long* arms, the *long* hands, the very *long* face and kind of the sadness of the character at the same time, because the Joker really, when you come down to it, is a very sad character. I mean, here he is, permanently scarred, no way of reversing the effects and it kind of made him a little crazy, I would think. But I've seen some **Conrad Veidt** films and I could see where the mannerisms would come from there. The face came from Steeple Chase.

DWIGHT: *How about other villains?*

FRED: The Penguin was an idea that my mother and father picked up, because when they were courting — at that time my mother was living in Albany and Bill would come up for the weekends and spend the weekends with her up there and they'd go for long walks and he'd say, "I've got an idea for a new story and I need a new character and these are his twists that I'm trying to work into the character." And they were walking along the road and basically just brainstorming ideas and she said, "Well, why don't you make him seem like a demented English butler? And give him an affectation for umbrellas. And think of all the things you can do with umbrellas — like swords, canes and in that range." "Oh, very good." "And why don't you call him Penguin because he looks like a little, fat penguin in a black and white butler suit — and if that's going to be his name why shouldn't he have a thing about birds?" And so that is how that happened — the gospel according to my mother. And I have a tendency to believe her on things like that — and so it came to be.

Two-Face was an idea that came out of Jekyll and Hyde. A lot of the characters just kind of developed from classical sources. But the most distinctive ones were definitely unreproducible anywhere else, they only came from someboby's imagination. Some characters were picked up and then they were dropped for years and then came back because all of a sudden the time was right to bring them back — Two-Face being one of them who has been in and out of comics every ten years. All of a sudden he's not a sympathetic and then he is a sympathetic and

FOREVER IF NECESSARY, NOW THAT YOU... OH...OH!... YOUR FACE.... YOUR FACE!
GILDA! WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
ONE SIDE OF YOUR FACE... IT'S MELTING!

© 1969 National Periodical Publications

© 1969 National Periodical Publications

"Kane had final say, but he wasn't doing much."

© 1985 DC COMICS, INC.

then... He's one of my favorite characters, atcually.

DWIGHT: *Any particular reason why?*

FRED: Because he's in everybody. Everybody has that quality about them. The original Two-Face, because of what he was — being a District Attorney who got splashed with acid and all that and went over to the other side — he's a sympathetic character, he's someone who was caused by a trauma. And I think that made him a very interesting character, that you could do more with him. Whereas someone who is *just* evil like the Penguin — the Penguin had no reason for being evil at all, he just was a wicked little man. The Joker, you could feel sympathy for — but he was a criminal before he even started and so, poor man, but he was wicked to start with. Two-Face was not a wicked person to start with, that's why of all the villains I kind of like him the most — something happened to make him go over. Everybody else was already on the other side. Sort of like Luthor in the SUPERMAN comics, did not start out as an evil genius, he just started out as a genius. And he had his traumas and all of a sudden he changed.

DWIGHT: *How about Robin?*

FRED: Robin. I don't really know how Robin came. Robin I think was from **Jerry Robinson**. From every article that I've ever read about the formation of Robin, he was Jerry's concept.

DWIGHT: *Kane takes credit for Robin.*

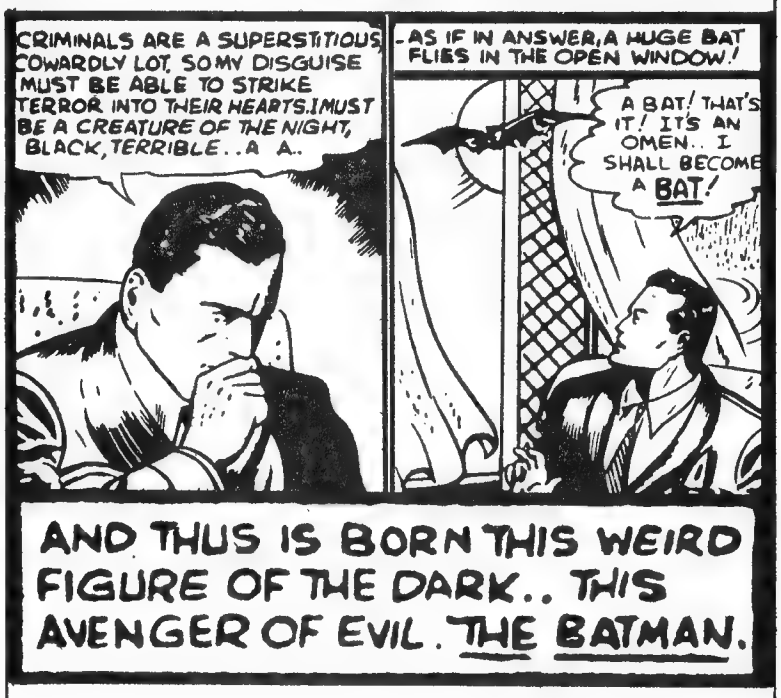
FRED: Does he really? I don't think **Bob Kane** did very many Robin stories as far as illustrating them. At that point Jerry was doing most of the artwork.

DWIGHT: *Jerry was ghosting for Kane?*

FRED: Yeah. **Bob Kane** had a number of people who worked under him as inkers and delineators and all of the other things that go into making an illustration. And Bob basically had final say but he was not doing much after a certain point. I mean, you can tell just by looking at the drawing styles. My friend Ian, who's a comic-book fanatic at age 13 can tell **Dick Sprang**'s work, **Jerry Robinson**'s work, all of the other people who worked for him. And he can tell **Kane**'s work, too, because there's a totally different feeling. Jerry's work is much more flowing and illustrative; Bob's was always very stiff, very comic-book looking. Jerry's actually were good illustrations, and more active. There was a flow in a panel that he would do whereas each panel that **Bob Kane** would do was entirely unto itself — good, bad or indifferent, they were individual things whereas Jerry's was a page concept, you could see the development of action panel to panel. It was like stop-frame photography.

DWIGHT: *How about Batgirl?*

FRED: Batwoman.


CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS COWARDLY LOT. SO MY DISGUISE MUST BE ABLE TO STRIKE TERROR INTO THEIR HEARTS. I MUST BE A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, BLACK, TERRIBLE.. A A..
AS IF IN ANSWER, A HUGE BAT FLIES IN THE OPEN WINDOW!
A BAT! THAT'S IT! IT'S AN OMEN.. I SHALL BECOME A BAT!
AND THUS IS BORN THIS WEIRD FIGURE OF THE DARK.. THIS AVENGER OF EVIL. THE BATMAN.

Bill's immortal passage presaged a half-century of superhero origins.

DWIGHT: *Actually, I think she was called Batgirl.*

FRED: No, Batgirl was her sidekick, her niece.

DWIGHT: *Well what about the Catwoman?*

FRED: The Catwoman was another one of those strange little ideas that Bill had about love-hate relationships. Where the Catwoman was *really* in love with Batman and Batman was *really* in love with the Catwoman but they were on such total opposite sides that it could not happen. But in the first few stories in which the Catwoman appeared they were romantically inclined — both of them being society people who knew each other out of costume.

DWIGHT: *Did they know each other's secret identities?*

FRED: No, they never knew each other's secret identities but they both knew each other and frequented the same social circles. Batman knew the Catwoman's identity but he never let on. But she never figured out that he was Bruce Wayne.

DWIGHT: *Do you have any of your father's stories?*

FRED: I have nothing at all at this point. Because of the way that National paid their writers in the old days, Bill never made any money writing comics. The stories were very, very cheap and because of his personal quirks about being always late on deadlines, they gave him fewer comics the longer he wrote for them. And when I was a kid, he had stacks and stacks of oldies, golden oldies that I would love to have. But he had to sell them off in order to survive. You know, I thought when I was cleaning out his apartment that I would find things. That's why I went through all of the files, to see if there was anything left — nothing, nothing at all. The only things that he had were late model comics and there wasn't much of a market for those, you could sell those for 50¢ a bundle. Which was unfortunate because I really wanted to have those for myself but there was just nothing left. There's something very bitter in me about that and it's a hard feeling to touch on. I just got such a feeling of coldness when I called them up to say that Bill had died. I talked to **Carmine Infantino** — he was the editor at the time, and he was very sorry to hear that Bill had died but he didn't really have much else to offer me in the way of help in giving the files to someone who could use them. And they were basically very cold to me. Another editor was very cold to me when I talked to him on the phone. I don't like going up there.

DWIGHT: *When did you go there?*

FRED: In October or November of '84 with my friend Ian who had never been to National Comics, and I said, "Great, let's go up to Lexington Avenue," and he said, "You don't even know where they are anymore." I said, "What do you mean?" And he said,

"I was thrown out of the DC offices."

"They're not at 575 Lex they're at 666 Fifth Avenue," and I said, "Oh, the sign of the beast, huh?" And we went up there and I walked into the offices and I said, "Hi, I'm Fred Finger."An editor came out and said, "Hi. What are you doing here?" and I said, "Well, basically, I'm here as a tourist. I've got a friend here who is very interested in comic books, he's got a marvellous collection, and he wanted to come up and see the place and I'd never been to your new offices — and gee, it's a real nice office." And he said, "Yeah, while you're here I have some checks for you." And I said, "Really? What for?" And he said because we reprinted a lot of your father's stories in the last ten years." And I said, "Oh, really? Well, here's my address if you can't find them now, no problem, send them on. How much are you paying?" Cause I figure, what could they pay, it was a $100 a story in those days. And it's $20 a page, is what they're paying on royalties now — and your average comic book is thirteen pages, including the cover.

DWIGHT: *So you went over to Ian's place and went through his files?*

FRED: Yeah, because he's a comic collector. He's got a lot of the reissued books. And we started going through them. Some of them have writer credits in them, some of them don't, but I know my father's style of writing. There were things about those stories that you could always tell. And I came up with a list of at least 20 stories and I called them up and I said, "Hi, I don't know how your research department is doing on this but I've come up with a good 20 stories that were Bill's that had been reprinted." And they said, "Well, we're only paying on issues from 1976 on." And I said, "No, that's not what you told me, actually. You told me that you were paying on issues going back to 1974 because you reissued a number of stories that year as a memorial to Bill. And you're going to tell me you're not going to pay me the royalties on those stories?" And this editor said, "Well, no. I was mistaken. We're not paying on the 60¢ issues, only on the dollar issues." And I said, "Okay, fine — these are the 60¢ issues, these are the dollar issues. The 60¢ issues have his name in them, where're the checks?" And he said, "Well, you have to do all your own research." And I don't have the time to do this. They've got the books up there, they have a research department and I don't want to have to go to a lawyer — I really don't. It's expensive, it's time-consuming, it makes for even more bitter feelings than are already there. And basically, the last time I was up there I was thrown out of the office — which I felt was rather rude handling.

Above: In the '40s Bill created Marvel's ALL WINNERS SQUAD — teaming Captain America and Sub-Mariner with the Human Torch. Below: Two of Bill's 1960s DC stories.

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
CO-STARRING THE SEA DEVILS!
SMASH THE MONSTER MAN OR DIE!
DON'T WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS — THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN SAVE YOU FROM THE SEA DEVILS!

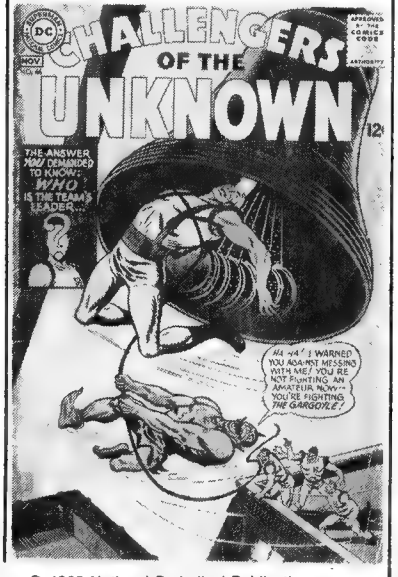
© 1966 National Periodical Publications

DWIGHT: *When was that?*

FRED: A couple months ago. Oh, I got in and talked to the editor and he said, "I don't have anything for you, so why don't you leave? And what *are* you doing here?" And I don't think it's right, I really don't. I don't have anything from my father at all at this point — the least of all any kind of inheritance. I certainly am not looking for money — and I was not looking for money when I went up there, all I was doing was going up there on a lark — I just wanted to see if it was still left. And then to be told that there are royalties coming to me — and then never another word — and then to be basically thrown out of an office is not a nice feeling. And I do know that they're planning on releasing a very serious-minded BATMAN movie within the next year or so and I don't want to go through what the Superman creators went through in order to get some kind of financial settlement when the SUPERMAN movie came out. Because if I have to pursue it that far, I will — I can make a lot of trouble in that respect. Because if I do hire an attorney, an attorney would have a research department go out and go through all the books that I have no time to do right now and I could call **Jerry Robinson**, I've got his number. I could call a number of people if they're still alive at this point to corroborate me on the fact that Bill never did receive the credit that was due him as a writer in his lifetime and now that he's no longer around to try to fight for his rights — I mean, he's just being taken for granted. I mean they could put up all the great laudatory paragraphs that they want in books and stuff but it doesn't cover the fact that he was there and that he never received anything for his creation.

DWIGHT: *What was your father's work relationship with Bob Kane?*

FRED: Not so good. I figured if they had a good work relationship I would have met him as a child when Bill was very active in comics. And I never met **Bob Kane**. I did — I met him once at the old National office. Once. But they did not have a good relationship at all. Basically because when Bill started


CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
THE ANSWER YOU DEMANDED TO KNOW: WHO IS THE TEAM'S LEADER...
AA-AA! I WARNED YOU AGAINST MESSING WITH ME! YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING AN AMATEUR NOW — YOU'RE FIGHTING THE GARGOYLE!

© 1965 National Periodical Publications

© 1967 Zenith Books, Inc./Marvel Comics Group

"The last years he lived in dreadful hotels."

writing he was ghost writing for **Bob Kane** and when National found out that Bob was not writing his own material they wanted to know who it was and brought Bill up to the office and they put him on as a freelance staff writer and I think that the relationship basically deteriorated after that point because Bill, now all of the sudden, had a great deal of creative freedom and he blossomed as a writer at that point and he didn't need to go through **Kane** for everything he wanted to do with a story. So it got to the point where Bob would say, "I'd like to do a story about such and such," and Bill would say, "Okay, great idea." He'd go home, work on the script bring it in, and that would be about the extent of their relationship as far as I can see. I knew more of the other staff writers and artists at that time in my life than anybody else — so I figured he was working more closely with them. I don't think that Bob really had that much to do with the development of Batman as a person after a certain point and certainly not by the time I came along. Basically, he would just oversee things and put his signature on things, and that was it. I read an interview in some fanzine with **Jerry Robinson** which basically said the same thing about Jerry's work with Bob — that once Jerry became chief illustrator for Batman he never saw Bob except to get a personal stamp of approval — that was about it. Meanwhile, **Mr. Kane** sat back and collected a lot of money for his name going on everything.

DWIGHT: *Did you know that he's the creative consultant on the BATMAN movie?*

FRED: Yes. Which is all right, I'm sure he deserves that — but were my father still alive would he be in that position? No. See, there lies a lot of problems. When they did the BATMAN TV series Bill was offered the position of going out to the coast and doing creative consultation on the initial pilot and the first season. And he didn't pick up on it. Which was his loss — for whatever reason, he was beating himself up. He was beating himself up. Had he done so I think that things would have been very different at this point, but he didn't and "what ifs" don't make it.

DWIGHT: *What was your father like as a man, his personality?*

FRED: Personality? Bill was a very quiet man, very dreamy, very personal in his life. Not too many close friends — his writing habits would preclude a lot of friendships because he basically would lock himself away for days at a time. He had a series of very stormy romances with a couple of women as I was growing up. I always get the feeling in retrospect that my father was a man who never grew up and by the time he realized it he was having his third heart attack and it was pretty close to the end. He was never very goal oriented, he was a very hand-to-mouth kind of person. His creativity got in the way of his pragmatism. He was never on time with a script, he was never on time with his child-support payments, if he paid them at all, he never set roots anywhere. I can remember in the first few years after my parents separated that Bill was constantly moving. And for awhile he would settle down for a couple of years and then he'd be off and moving again. And I know a lot of it had to do with economics because he wasn't making enough money in order to be able to afford to stay in one place long enough, but the last few years of his life it was getting pretty bad — the last ten years of his life it was awful. He was down to living in dreadful little hotel rooms in and around town, very depressing. As a father he was as good as he could be. He turned me on to a lot of wonderful things.

DWIGHT: *Was he very supportive to you?*

FRED: When he was there he was supportive, but he was not there enough. And I think he had enough problems with his own maleness that I never really had a strong male image to deal with. He was in a fantasy world, he really was. It's hard to describe — no, it's not hard to describe, *I'm* having a hard time describing it. I went through a Life Spring course last summer and one of the operations in it is to picture your parents in their most typical positions and the only way I could think of my father most of the time was lying on his back, dreaming — and that's the strongest, most vivid impression. Either

Wildcat's origin, by Bill and Irwin Hasen, creator of the syndicated strip DONDI.

WILDCAT
AS NIGHT CLOAKS THE CITY WITH A MANTLE OF BLACKNESS A DARK, LITHE FIGURE CAN BE SEEN PARTING THRU THE SHADOWS... MUSCLES RIPPLE UNDER HIS SKIN-TIGHT COSTUME, AS HE PROWLS WITH THE SILENT TREAD OF A GREAT-WILDCAT!
WHO IS THIS MYSTERIOUS BEING? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? WHAT IS THE SECRET OF HIS ORIGIN? THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW!
IRWIN HASEN and BILL FINGER
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN SENSATION COMICS #1 (JAN. 1942)
OUR STORY BEGINS IN THE HOME OF HENRY GRANT- THE PROUD FATHER OF A NEWBORN SON!..
-MY SON, YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE BOY WHO IS NOT AFRAID OF LIFE- YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BRUISE AS EASILY AS I DID WHEN I WAS A CHILD- NOT YOU- TED GRANT!
THIS IS THE STORY OF WILDCAT! READ IT AND SEE HOW A NEMESIS OF CRIME IS BORN.....
COPYRIGHT © 1941 BY J.R. PUBLISHING CO. COPYRIGHT © RENEWED 1968 BY NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.

"He wrote the screenplay THE GREEN SLIME."

that or fighting with one of his girlfriends when he wasn't writing. And he really got into a state where he was in a perpetual dream, because of unfulfilled hopes and unquested goals and a lot of that — he was weak, he was a weak man. Which is why I 'm having problems now, because if he had been a little more assertive everything would be in order and I'd be able to get what's due him, at least it would be coming to me and my mother at this point. But he was really a good guy and he had so much to give — and he really didn't know how to do it. He never got the skills of being a good communicator. Which is why he was a good writer, because on his personal levels he was terrible. But he could put it all on a page and it was great. Every weekend of my childhood was spent at the Museum of Natural History, even when I was too young to legally get in there he would sneak me in. Because they used to have regulations about how old you could be to get into the Planetarium and he snuck me in there when I was four years old — at that time you weren't allowed in there if you were under six. He sneaked me in there under his raincoat. I had the biggest collection of dinosaurs and anything related to that when I was a kid and I had a very good support system in that I wanted to be an artist and I wanted to be involved in creating. So that kind of support I got. But where I didn't get any support was in interpersonal dealings and that was hard, that was very hard because it made me a very private person caught up in my fantasy worlds and lots of "what ifs" and you can't deal with the world that way. Nobody cares about your what if, they only care about the now and where is it. So it showed in the way he dealt with things, he was a procrastinator *par excellance.* Which is thoroughly recorded in any interview about Bill,or any article — he was never on time with anything. And he always had an excuse, good, bad or indifferent, there was always an excuse for it. I guess that that's the major sad thing about him is that he just never got it together. But I loved him, very dearly. I love him more now, in retrospect, than I did for a long time because I guess now that I'm older and I can see things a little bit more clearly, I can see a lot of him in me and I know when I'm treading what lines.

He liked to play golf — something that I cannot do. He loved to type — something that I cannot do. Every term paper that I ever had to turn in he always typed for me.

DWIGHT: *Did he tell you his feelings about the comic books?*

FRED: He hated comics. He wrote them for so many years. He liked the writing but he had a kind of negative pride about writing comic books. And he wrote other things as well. He would write scripts for radio, he would write articles on handyman stuff because he liked doing carpentry and he was a good carpenter, too. He wrote dreadful movie scripts, including one that comes up every now and again as a late movie or an afternoon movie, THE GREEN SLIME. Did you ever see that? About these people that are out in outer space and there's this little germ that turns into this big green slime thing that if it touches you gives you an electric shock and burns you — nasty stuff. And he wrote for HAWAIIAN EYE and 77 SUNSET STRIP and THE ROARING TWENTIES and all those things that came out of Warner Brothers in the early '60s.

DWIGHT: *So he did manage to break out of the comic-book mold?*

FRED: He did, he did. And for a long time he stopped writing comic books entirely. He was for a while writing training films for the U.S. Army — this was in the mid-'60s. By that point I was kind of pissed off at him anyway, and I said, "You know, I liked it better when you were writing comics because at least I could believe in you, cause here you are writing stuff you don't even believe in." So that didn't last too much longer anyway. How do you feel when you're an anti-war person and you know your father is a pacifist and he's writing training films for commandos to go to Viet Nam? It just doesn't gel too well.

He had a writing partner for a while when they were doing TV scripts and movies and such. That's another friend of his that got lost along the way, too.

DWIGHT: *What did you like most about your father's writing?*

FRED: His sense of fun about it. When Bill wrote a story it was a *comic* book story. There was fun involved in it. The puns did not become as meaningless as they did when Batman changed in the '60s after the TV show, where it became a cartoony comic book. These were comic books that had a sense of humor in addition to being crime fighters and all that. There was something funny about them, the dialogue, the situations, the over-sized milk bottles falling over and actually being full of milk, the giant electric train sets that you could ride on, these kinds of things I enjoyed — they were some-

Giant props — a sure sign of the Finger touch.

© 1956 National Periodical Publications, Ltd.

"At the end my father was just beaten."

© 1976 National Periodical Publications, Ltd.

Above: Joe Kubert's rendering of Bill's VIKING PRINCE story, from the '70s. Below: the first Green Lantern declares his fearless oath for the very first time, originated by Bill.

thing different than was going on in other comics then. You could read a SUPERMAN book and from a certain period they would all be the same story — it's all aliens coming to earth to do this; or it's all Luthor doing that; or it's combining three or four villains in a story, you know. But Bill's comics had a sense of humor about city living, they were very urban, they were very much a New York view of things in the '40s — all that glitters is not gold but how deep do you have to scratch before you find the real shit?

DWIGHT: *When I was interviewing Bob Kane, he actually said that your father was one of the great unsung heroes of Batman and started giving Bill a fair amount of credit for the creation of Batman.*

FRED: That's good, I'm glad to hear that. Maybe they'll be so kind as to put a memorial plaque on the movie. Oh, I'm sure at this point, because there's been so much more exposure about Bill and about comic-book writing and everything that he can't deny it anymore, because for years **Bob Kane** was just basically blowing his own horn and saying, "It was all mine, everything was mine," and it's not true.

DWIGHT: *How did your father react to that?*

FRED: I think it made him have even less self-esteem than he already had, basically, because he never could get any further.

DWIGHT: *He didn't stand up?*

FRED: No, my father had a very weak spine. As I say, there was very little goal orientation, maybe it's growing up during the depression. I'm sure that that would leave me kind of grasping at things if I grew up in the '30s. Bill was born in 1914, so by the time 1933 rolled around **Roosevelt** started putting into operation all the things that helped the nation get out of the depression. By that point I'm sure he was pretty whipped around.

Basically, I don't think that Bill ever thought that comics would get to the point where they have now. Maybe in the last few years of his life he began to see that he really did throw away a lot instead of pursuing it, but by that point he was so beaten. He went back to writing comics the last few years he was alive and his stories didn't have the same kind of flair or pizzazz about them at all. Batman had changed so much as a character in the six or seven years he was not writing for them that it was very hard for him to go back and try to write the way he used to. So that a story that used to take him a week to turn out would take him like twice as long because all of the sudden his story values didn't hold true any longer. And, I don't know, maybe that was one of the things contributing to his end — he just couldn't do it any more and he didn't know what else to do. You spend 20 odd years trying to write something and then you stop and try to pick it up again and it just doesn't work anymore.

DWIGHT: *Was Batman all he did for National/DC?*

FRED: No. He wrote and conceived the GREEN LANTERN, for many, many years. He also would write other stories on the side, the HAWKMAN, the ATOM, FLASH, WONDER WOMAN — anyone who was in the National house. There are stories there that he wrote. Those I have no idea about at all — they're just part of all the pulps that were ever produced. But that picture that I gave you, the one that's kind of beat-up, has his three characters — Rusty, The Green Lantern and Batman.

DWIGHT: *Rusty — I'm not familiar with...*

FRED: I've never seen a comic with RUSTY AND HIS PALS — it must have been a very short-lived series of books. I think that was the first thing, other than Batman, that he was involved in writing. That was for National. I have a feeling that Rusty and His Pals is sort of like a DEAD-END KIDS/BOWERY BOYS sort of story book, which of course would not have any kind of application in the 1980s at all.

DWIGHT: *So you don't keep in touch with comics at all, aside from walking by a rack and looking?*

FRED: No, I don't. When Ian was staying here for a couple of months while his mother's loft was being redone, he walked into the house with more comic books than I have ever seen since I was a kid.

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

"I'm now working on a BATMAN movie."

BOB KANE

The name Bob Kane should be familiar to anyone who grew up reading BATMAN — he's the guy who started it all, back in 1939. Bob's creation has become such an institution that it is difficult for us, in this day and age, to envision a world without Bruce, Alfred, Robin, Wayne Manor and all the rest.

But as deeply entrenched as the Bat-Mythos has become, all the rich lore and legend did not spring into Creation fully-grown like Athena from the head of Zeus. Only one man can take us back to the first tentative steps — the genesis of the modern hero — from the 500-year-old sketchbook diagrams of a Master, to the comic-book template of another hero whose success Bob was asked to imitate, in order to try to score another bullseye for a then-fledgling publishing company, better known these days as DC Comics.

The influence of Bob's guiding hand is still in active effect, you will discover from this colorful portrait of a hero-maker — because Kane is a consultant for the current BATMAN movie now in production in Hollywood, where the veteran artist also makes his home...

DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN: *When you created Batman, did you think that he would catch on and be as popular as Superman?*

BOB KANE: After the first year, I did, yeah. Actually, Batman outsold Superman in some of the issues and that was the giveaway. Even though SUPERMAN was first, BATMAN many times would be leading in sales — after Robin was introduced — so I did have an inkling, even as young as I was. Well, hindsight and foresight — a lot of times you don't always know, at the very beginning, where it's going to go. But I did have a feeling that if it was not as big as SUPERMAN it certainly would be a close second. At times, like when the TV show came out, it outsold SUPERMAN because of the popularity.

I'm now working on a BATMAN motion picture — that's why I'm out here in Hollywood. It's been delayed for two or three years — but it will be produced. We're looking to go into pre-production shortly — soon as we get a director. We have a script written by **Tom Mankiewicz** — he wrote SUPERMAN I, I believe — and they're ready to go any month now. I've been waiting. We were supposed to go a year and a half ago, when I got here, but they had some trouble with directors. They're about to roll again. Hopefully, it will be a big movie.

DWIGHT: *Has Batman been cast?*

BOB: Not yet. We'll have unknowns for Batman and Robin and probably stars for the only two villains who remain in the script — that's the Joker and the Penguin — no other villains. And it will be less campy than the TV show. More mysterious. I'll be sixty-four soon. I started young enough. Start young, and then you can see a lot of decades go by with success — if you're successful to start with.

DWIGHT: *Not only that, but you've really seen comic books grow into a...*

BOB: Major culture, an American culture. It was really nothing when we started — we were sort of a nucleus for the new cartoonists, you might say. In those days... I guess I started up with **Iger and Eisner** and that was about 1936. I was just a kid then, submitting work **Bill Eisner** and I went

THE BEST COMIC OF THE '80s?

LOVE AND ROCKETS

"The pure and essential crackle of comicbooks at their best runs through these pages. Accept no substitutes."
—ALAN MOORE (Swamp Thing)

"The Hernandez Brothers are extending the parameters of the comic book form as an expressive artform . . ."
—KEN KRUGE (WBAI, New York)

"A pleasure to read over and over again—and hell, even more."
—MATT HOWARTH (Heavy Metal)

"Their stories have a naturalism that I've never seen done in any comics."
—STEVE LEIALOHA (Marvel Comics)

"One of the best things on the market."
—STEVE RUDE (Nexus)

"Everybody should be out there reading Love and Rockets."
—HOWARD CHAYKIN (American Flagg!)

"C'est une merveille . . . un dessin 'parfait'!"
—MOEBIUS (Heavy Metal)

". . . the most unpredictable fantasy and the most advanced characterization published today."
—WENDY PINI (Elfquest)

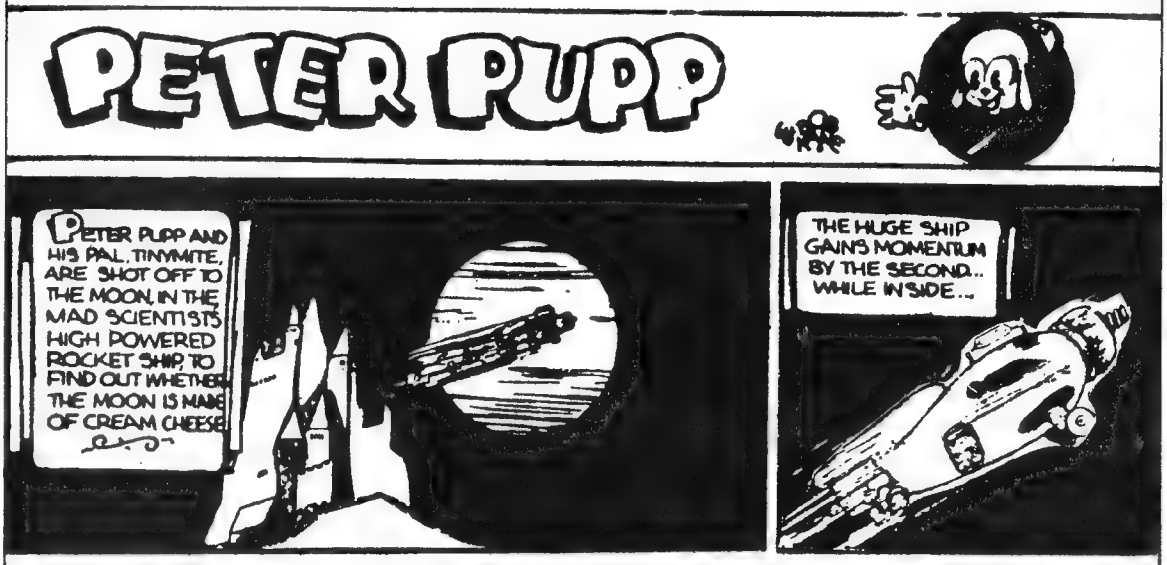
"Never before have comics produced such strong cumulative effects."
—DAVID CHUTE (L.A. Herald-Examiner)

"So real, so funny, so rich. There's no comic like it. In fact, there's nothing like it, period."
—HEIDI MacDONALD (Comics Buyer's Guide)

Published every other month by FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

1985 Jaime Hernandez

"Eisner and I went to school together."


PETER PUPP
PETER PUPP AND HIS PAL, TINYMITE, ARE SHOT OFF TO THE MOON, IN THE MAD SCIENTIST'S HIGH POWERED ROCKET SHIP, TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE MOON IS MADE OF CREAM CHEESE
THE HUGE SHIP GAINS MOMENTUM BY THE SECOND... WHILE INSIDE...

Some pre-Batman art by Kane: Bob's first strip, created for Eisner & Iger.

to DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx together. We were always vying for supremacy on the CLINTON NEWS. We used to do editorial cartoons and, of course, Bill was a better cartoonist than I was at that time. He got into the CLINTON NEWS more than I did — but anyway, that's where I first met Bill. When I left high school I actually won a scholarship to an art school at the Flat Iron Building on 23rd Street — on top, on the roof. It was a three-year course, $1,000 a year, and one of my teachers at DeWitt Clinton gave me the scholarship. I used to major in art — I hated high school, I hated school altogether — I guess I was a rebel. I just wanted to draw. I felt I'd be a famous cartoonist even when I was ten years old.

My dad, who worked as a printer at the DAILY NEWS, used to ask these cartoonists whom he met down there — creators of MOON MULLINS and DICK TRACY and POPEYE — "do you make much a week?" They said, "Sure, if you're highly successful, you can make thousands a week." Of course, it appealed to a poor kid from the Bronx, who didn't have much money at that time, to kind of set my sights on this goal. So I just kept copying cartoons and I was a great copycat, I can tell you that — I knew I had talent.

DWIGHT: *How did you actually get started doing comics?*

BOB: I got in touch with **Iger and Eisner**, who had a new comic book at that time called WOW COMICS, and I created a character called Peter Pupp that was kind of an animated **Disney**-type character. He had a little colleague — instead of Robin, he was called Tagalong. They were kind of the first basis of the Batman and Robin which would come a few years later. Anyway, they went to the moon in a little space ship, and I guess I was always ahead of my time — forty years later they did in fact, as you know, go to the moon. But we had Peter Pup going to the moon in comical adventures 'til they got there — hopping off on Saturn like a merry-go-round — and it was real fun. And finally when they got to the moon they found the old *cliche* true — that it was really green cheese, so that was kind of a cute little comic.

I really wanted to be a *comic* artist, doing a slapstick kind of thing rather than illustrative drawing like FLASH GORDON. The comics really appealed to me more, and I spent eight months or so at Fleisher Studios in New York doing animated cartoons. I did BETTY BOOP — I did fill-ins, I did coloring, I did outlines of the ink. I was about eighteen then — I must have created Batman probably nearer to nineteen — but about eight months or so prior to Batman, I did work at Fleisher when they had their New York studio. But when they moved to Florida, I didn't want to make the move — I like New York, so I didn't go.

DWIGHT: *What did you do after that?*

BOB: I started getting back into the comic-book scene again and I did, I guess, fill-ins for almost all the early comic books. The leaders, of course, were probably **Eisner and Iger** at that time, they had a few books going, and then DC came in with ACTION COMICS and DETECTIVE COMICS. I believe DETECTIVE probably started about 1935 — four or five years before Batman. They never had a lead character.

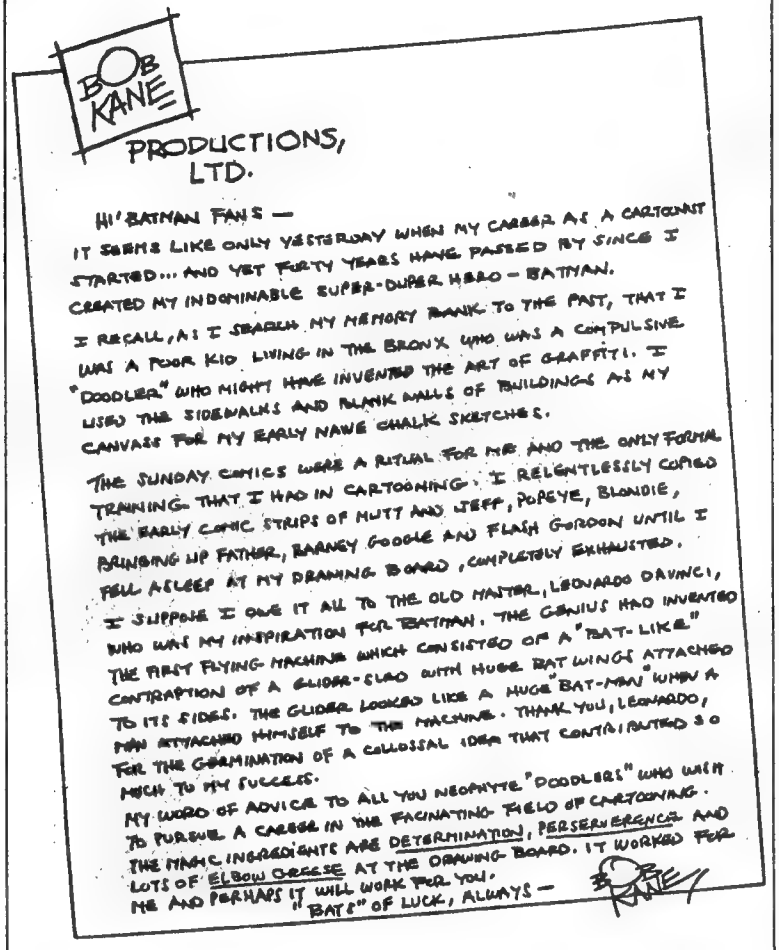
DWIGHT: *It was more of a mystery title...*

BOB: Right. And, of course, the artwork was very — in the innovative days — very amateurish. Most of the cartoons weren't very good at that time. But they had a need for neophyte cartoonists and it was kind of like what vaudeville was to actors in the early days — it was kind of a road to get into the big time, which to me was always newspaper syndication. And so it was learning and it paid — but it didn't pay too much.

In the early days, I remember **Eisner and Iger** paid me five dollars a page. I suppose, in 1937, five dollars was *worth* five dollars and it meant a lot. But by the time I bought the paper and the ink and the pens, I think I spent more than I earned. Still, that was the beginning. It's always fun, somehow, before the fact. I find that getting there, sometimes, is much more thrilling than

© 1985 Caplin-Iger Company, Ltd.
© 1985 Caplin-Iger Company, Ltd.

"I never did approve of ghost artists on


BOB KANE
PRODUCTIONS, LTD.
HI' BATMAN FANS —
IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY WHEN MY CAREER AS A CARTOONIST STARTED... AND YET FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED BY SINCE I CREATED MY INDOMINABLE SUPER-DUPER HERO - BATMAN.
I RECALL, AS I SEARCH MY MEMORY BANK TO THE PAST, THAT I WAS A POOR KID LIVING IN THE BRONX, WHO WAS A COMPULSIVE "DOODLER" WHO MIGHT HAVE INVENTED THE ART OF GRAFFITI. I USED THE SIDEWALKS AND BLANK WALLS OF BUILDINGS AS MY CANVASS FOR MY EARLY NAIVE CHALK SKETCHES.
THE SUNDAY COMICS WERE A RITUAL FOR ME AND THE ONLY FORMAL TRAINING THAT I HAD IN CARTOONING. I RELENTLESSLY COPIED THE EARLY COMIC STRIPS OF MUTT AND JEFF, POPEYE, BLONDIE, BRINGING UP FATHER, BARNEY GOOGLE AND FLASH GORDON UNTIL I FELL ASLEEP AT MY DRAWING BOARD, COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED.
I SUPPOSE I OWE IT ALL TO THE OLD MASTER, LEONARDO DAVINCI, WHO WAS MY INSPIRATION FOR BATMAN. THE GENIUS HAD INVENTED THE FIRST FLYING MACHINE WHICH CONSISTED OF A "BAT-LIKE" CONTRAPTION OF A GLIDER-SLED WITH HUGE BAT WINGS ATTACHED TO ITS SIDES. THE GLIDER LOOKED LIKE A HUGE "BAT-MAN" WHEN A MAN ATTACHED HIMSELF TO THE MACHINE. THANK YOU, LEONARDO, FOR THE GERMINATION OF A COLOSSAL IDEA THAT CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO MY SUCCESS.
MY WORD OF ADVICE TO ALL YOU NEOPHYTE "DOODLERS" WHO WISH TO PURSUE A CAREER IN THE FACINATING FIELD OF CARTOONING. THE MAGIC INGREDIENTS ARE DETERMINATION, PERSEVERANCE AND LOTS OF ELBOW GREASE AT THE DRAWING BOARD. IT WORKED FOR ME AND PERHAPS IT WILL WORK FOR YOU.
"BATS" OF LUCK, ALWAYS —
BOB KANE

when you arrive, really. When you finally arrive — then what? Now what do I do? So getting there, I feel, was really great fun in the early days and I loved to draw.

DWIGHT: *How did you come to create Batman?*

BOB: The year was 1938, and **Vincent Sullivan** was the editor at DC Comics. I had sent up some sketches prior to going to DC that I did of Flash Gordon. As I said, I was great at copying — they looked very illustrative and they looked practically like **Alex Raymond's**. So he said, "You know, Bob, I notice you have a flair for illustration." I said, "Well, I don't really like it as much as the other." I was doing fill-in cartoons for them. He said, "But, you know, there's a character called Superman by **Siegel and Shuster** and they are making about $800 a week apiece." I was making $50 a week, $35 a week, just filling in. I said, "My God, if I could make that kind of money." He said, "Well, we're looking for another superhero and, if you can come up something, we'll take it — if it's good."

Now here's where Batman really did come from: When I was twelve or thirteen, in my early teens, I saw a book by **Leonardo da Vinci**. All his sketches — the flying machine, the parachute — all the early innovations **da Vinci** did 500 years ago. In fact, the IBM Building had a lot of his mock-ups a few years ago in New York. They were just mock-ups from the drawings and they were marvelous. At any rate, what impressed me most in the book of **da Vinci** was the flying machine. It had a certain name, *orni* something I can't pronounce, but it was the first flying machine — it was really a glider — it was a man on a sled and it had bat wings. That's really the one that influenced me the most to create Batman.

On **da Vinci's** sketch he had the blurb, "And your bird shall have no other wings but that of the bat." That impressed me. It looked like a Batman to me — it was a dummy, really, lying flat on kind of a slab, which looked like a sled, and then his arms were extended and there were bat wings.

And **da Vinci** really sent men off mountains, believe it or not, in this contraption! The only mistake he made was at the beginning where, like an animated cartoon, they flapped the wings and kind of zoomed down and crashed. However, he felt he was doing something wrong and something right. Then he noticed that seagulls would glide, by keeping their wings stabilized, and so he stabilized the wings and men were actually able to fly off the mountains and glide to the bottom. Anyway, in my early teens, I made sketches of that and put it away in my trunk. So that was the most influential on Batman — but I was also a great movie buff.

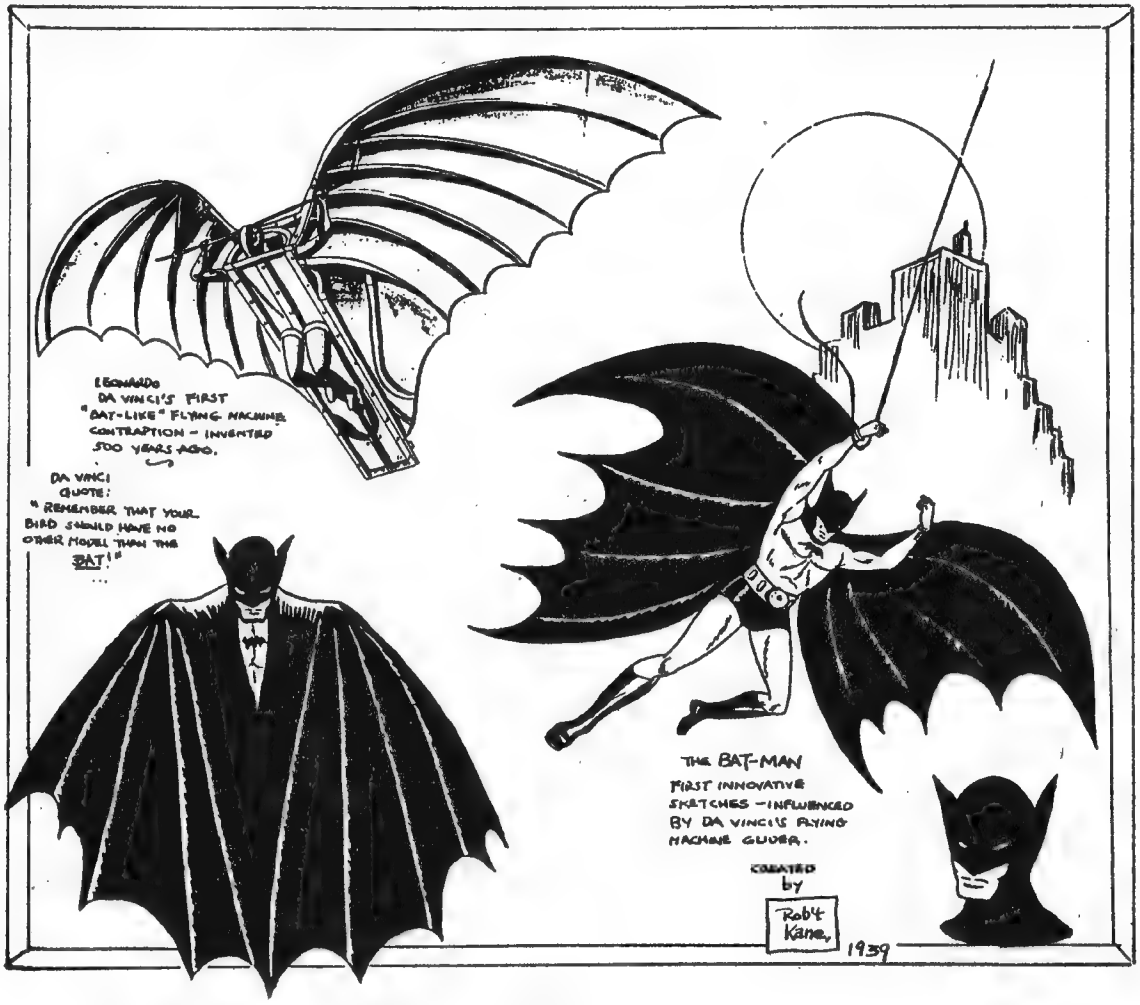
When I was a kid I used to go to all the movies and I loved **Doug Fairbanks, Sr.** He did THE BLACK PIRATE and THE MARK OF ZORRO — and Zorro had the dual identity, as you know. He used to come out of the cave on his black horse — Tornado, I think the horse was called — and he would enter the cave and he'd go up through a grandfather clock and exit into his living room. By day he was the bored count — kind of a foppish character who assumed this dual identity to throw, in that day, the desperados off the track — and then, at night, he would put on kind of a handkerchief mask with slits for the eyes and he'd use a sword. When he'd meet the Spanish desperados he would put a "Z" across their forehead with his sword, and that's how he apprehended the dastardly criminals of those days.

So **da Vinci**, of course, was the first influence on Batman — and Zorro's dual identity was the second. And I guess the third one was — there was a movie way back with **Chester Morris** called THE BAT WHISPERS, a mystery scripted by **Mary Roberts Rinehart**, the mystery writer. **Chester Morris** wore a bat costume — only he was the villain. So I just changed mine into a hero. But I did like the costume: it had gloves with kind of wings on them and, of course, the cape like a bat wing — and he wore the hood and that was probably another great influence.

I saw all these before I was 19. So when **Sullivan** said, "Can you come up with another character?" I went home that weekend and made tracings of Superman,

BATMAN — it doesn't look like Bob Kane."

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.


LEONARDO DA VINCI'S FIRST "BAT-LIKE" FLYING MACHINE CONTRAPTION — INVENTED 500 YEARS AGO.
DA VINCI QUOTE: "REMEMBER THAT YOUR BIRD SHOULD HAVE NO OTHER MODEL THAN THE BAT!"
THE BAT-MAN
FIRST INNOVATIVE SKETCHES — INFLUENCED BY DA VINCI'S FLYING MACHINE GUIDE.
CREATED by
Bob't Kane,
1939

Bob Kane's secret collaborator — Leonardo da Vinci.

and then I remembered the bat and so forth. In the first sketch, he looked like a birdman, he had big wings — and then I remembered the bat and I changed it to Bat-Man. It had a hyphen between the Bat and Man. He was called THE BAT-MAN by **Robert Kane.** And, of course, that was the May issue of 1939, and that's when it started.

DWIGHT: *I heard somewhere that you worked with Bill Finger in creating the final look of Batman...*

BOB: Oh, yes, I was getting to Bill. I always felt rather badly that I never gave him a by-line in BATMAN, because he was quite instrumental. Bill went to Clinton, too — he graduated about a year before me so I didn't know him at Clinton, but we met at a party. At that time, he was a shoe salesman who used to love to read pulp magazines, you know, like DOC SAVAGE. There were a few others, but DOC SAVAGE comes to my mind — he was kind of a super-strongman. Anyway, I called Bill and said, "I have a new character called The Bat-Man and I made some crude, elementary sketches I'd like you to look at." So he came over. We were friends, and he started to make some changes — he said, "Well, why don't you put the mask down low and why don't you take the eyeballs out of the slits in the mask — it'll look more eerie," which I did. I thought of it at first, and I did have the sketch down. He was improving what I already did, so I guess it was anti-climactic, so to speak.

DWIGHT: *Once you had the basic idea down, it wound up becoming this collaboration of, say, refining the mood?*

BOB: Exactly, Dwight. In those days, it wasn't like today. The cartoonists generally got all the credit — the writers, their names never appeared on the strip. It isn't like today, with the colorists and the inker and letterer and who cares? In those days it was, like, one artist and he had his name over it — the policy of DC in the comic books was, if you can't write it, obtain other writers, but their name would never appear on the comic book in the finished version. So Bill never asked me for it and I never volunteered — I guess my ego at that time. And I felt badly, really, when he died. At any rate, he started to write — in fact, he wrote the first story. Although he wrote many of the early stories, I was also the silent writer, obviously, since we would talk them over together.

DWIGHT: *What was the process? How did you work together?*

BOB: I'll tell you how Bill wrote: he generally came to me with a giant prop. He'd start sometimes in the middle or work backwards from the giant prop. Not all the time, of

OUR FUTURE'S ONLY HOPE...
IS HERE TODAY

BLACKMOON™

COMING SOON!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

US COMICS

107 E. LANCASTER AVENUE, WAYNE, PA 19087
(215) 688-5166

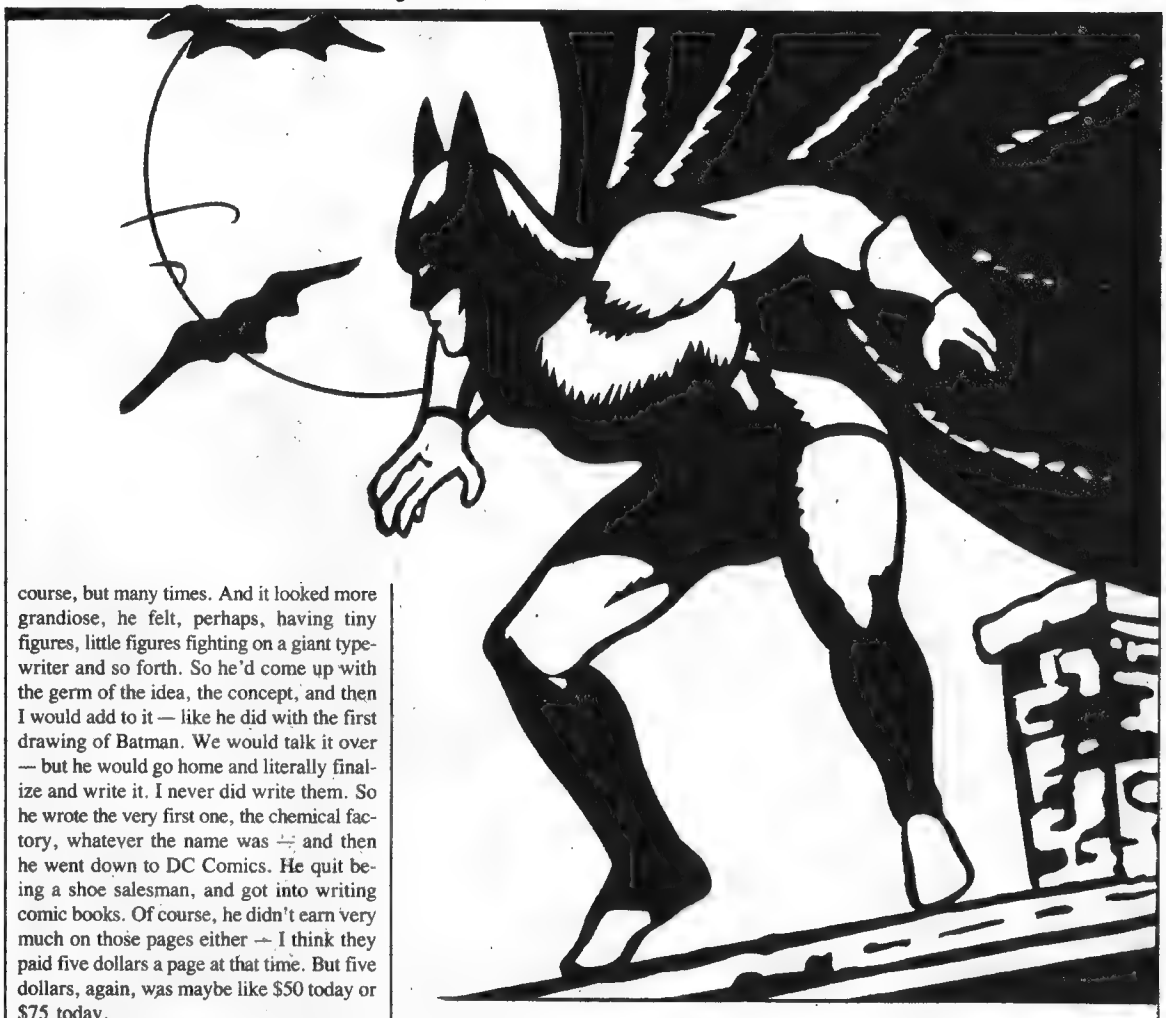
BLACKMOON © 1985 By James C. Hallett

COMIC HOOK™

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE–NEW COMICS
OLD COMICS–MAGAZINES–GRAPHIC NOVELS
POSTERS–T-SHIRTS
107 E. LANCASTER AVENUE, WAYNE, PA 19087
(215) 688-5166
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

"BATMAN ran a year, when Robin was introduced."

© 1985 DC COMICS, INC.



course, but many times. And it looked more grandiose, he felt, perhaps, having tiny figures, little figures fighting on a giant typewriter and so forth. So he'd come up with the germ of the idea, the concept, and then I would add to it — like he did with the first drawing of Batman. We would talk it over — but he would go home and literally finalize and write it. I never did write them. So he wrote the very first one, the chemical factory, whatever the name was — and then he went down to DC Comics. He quit being a shoe salesman, and got into writing comic books. Of course, he didn't earn very much on those pages either — I think they paid five dollars a page at that time. But five dollars, again, was maybe like $50 today or $75 today.

DWIGHT: *I read that he was big on providing research and stuff for the stories.*

BOB: Bill would go to the library, he'd tear out articles in the newspaper, he had a whole morgue — he had a lot of clippings. And he also had a great background in reading the pulps, like DOC SAVAGE, and had a collection of the pulps. At times, he would pull a little from here, a little from there, and then create a lot on his own. Of couse, I'd come in and help him along and we'd have conferences, and so the story finally evolved. But he wasn't a natural writer, so it would take him much longer. The deadline would come up and he'd come in with the last page. And that was his only major fault, even when he worked at DC Comics. He was always late on a story. But his stories were always better than anybody's — he had the real flavor of Batman.

Bill wrote many of the stories until he died, I guess in the '60s. He kept writing them in the '40s and '50s and early '60s — not all of them, of course, but the first year or two he wrote almost 95% of THE BATMAN. **Gardner Fox** came and he wrote some of the early BATMANs, too. He was one of the few writers who got his name on a comic book because he did, I think, even create some of the characters. Not the drawings — he would create the character and then there'd be an artist, 'cause he wasn't an artist, **Gardner Fox.** But he did a lot of the early BATMANs also.

DWIGHT: *What do you think about the other artists who have followed you on BATMAN?*

BOB: Years later, when the ghosts came along, they thought they'd improved on my drawings. You see, that's another fallacy. I feel a ghost artist's job is to emulate the cartoonist, as near as you can, instead of recreating what he already did in his own style. Today, of course, any resemblance to the Batman I drew and what they are drawing now is strictly coincidental. They draw much better than I do, but I had it down to a more simplified, DICK TRACY style. That was my style. I didn't try to be FLASH GORDON. I could have drawn better, but I didn't want to — I wanted it simple. It's like ORPHAN ANNIE. They have a very good artist, he's a fine illustrator — but it's wrong to get an illustrator on **Harold Gray's** LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE. They should have gotten a hack cartoonist who would simply emulate **Harold Gray**. Now ORPHAN ANNIE became the style of the new artist. So, I never did approve of ghost artists on my strip — I think that they malign it, they distort it and they recreate it in their style, until it doesn't look like **Bob Kane**. Why not do your own strip? If you're going to do somebody else's, emulate them.

DWIGHT: *You came up with a very stark style that concentrated action and mood.*

BOB: Exactly. **Jules Feiffer** once wrote an article about me. He said "**Bob Kane** has captured and recreated the old Warner Brother motion picture-style mood of the

"Jerry Robinson thinks he's God's gift."

early mystery movies: shadows — long shadows — and a lot of blacks." That was the mood that I wanted to prevail. Today in the '80s, I notice the artists are now going back to the *mysterioso* quality of my early year or two of Batman before the colors became lighter, they put in a lot of reds and yellows. In the beginning, I tried to keep it with the low blues and greens and purples and blacks.

DWIGHT: *Well, you've already discussed Bill Finger — what about Jerry Robinson, who's name also seems linked to the Batman legend?*

BOB: Now, enter **Jerry Robinson**. Take **Jerry Robinson**, please! He's not my favorite person, for many reasons. He's smug, he thinks that he's God's gift to the world — and it all began, of course, with him claiming he created the Joker in every article he's ever written. He did *not* and I want to refute this succinctly once and for all, because it's coming from the horse's mouth — me. If he did create it, I would have given him credit now, because I'm a very honest person with a lot of integrity. But Jerry did not create the Joker — or Robin, as he claims. The Joker, in fact, was created by **Bill Finger**; the drawing was created by **Bob Kane**. Bill came to me, I remember this as clearly as 45 years ago, I've a great memory: Bill showed me a photograph of **Conrad Veidt**, the German actor. **Veidt** was in the movie called THE MAN WHO LAUGHED — that's based on a famous novel by **Victor Hugo**. And that's where we got the Joker from, it was a photograph. I have it in my New York home — I don't have it out here in Hollywood, unfortunately. It's **Conrad Veidt** smiling that ghastly Joker smile. In a nutshell, THE MAN WHO LAUGHED was about a young gypsy boy who had his mouth cut into a ghastly grin, when he was just a young boy of 13, by other gypsies who raided the rival gypsy camp. And he grew up with funereal eyes — because it wasn't a happy smile, it was a ghastly smile — and that's why they use the word ghastly a lot in the writing. Anyway, this photograph of **Veidt** was the spitting image of the Joker. Not of the caricature that you see today that looks like a buffoon, like a clown — that's not the way I created the Joker. He was more serious when I did him and he didn't always laugh. That's the real origin of the Joker — not **Jerry Robinson's** version with the playing card. That's bullshit. That all came later. He might have brought in a playing card and said, "Hey, why don't you throw in a playing card here and there" — that I do not remember. But he did not create the original origin, **Bill Finger** did, and he should get all the credit for it. I created the drawing. Jerry did not create the drawing or the concept. I want to clear that up. I wanted to refute him many times in newspapers, and sue him at one point, I was so agitated by his smugness — constantly saying he created the Joker. It's in every article, every book he's ever written. *That's* the true story. He's one of the all-time great villains, he should have the correct origin.

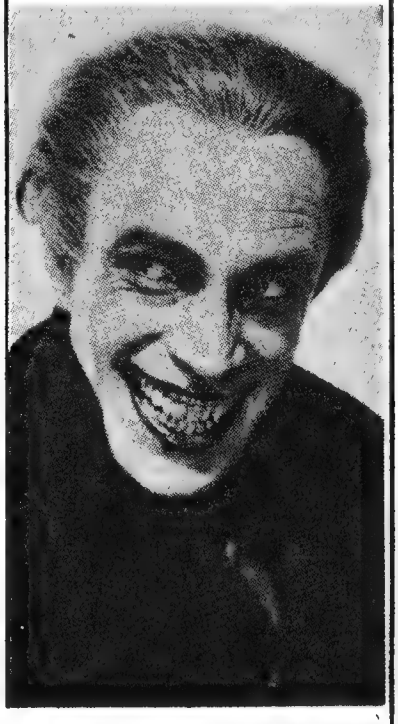
DWIGHT: *What about Robin?*

BOB: Robin distinctly came from me and not from him. I don't know where he said he created Robin. He said it was created from the bird, the red robin. Well, that's bullshit.

DWIGHT: *I have heard that it actually came more from Robin Hood.*

BOB: That's where I actually created the tunic. He's wearing the costume of Robin Hood — the tunic and the shoes. I created the Boy Wonder and the image that every child would visualize in some wish-fulfillment fantasy — fighting alongside this great superhero, Batman — that's where Robin came from. Batman ran a year — from '39 to '40 — alone; in 1940, Robin was introduced. "Introducing: Robin, the

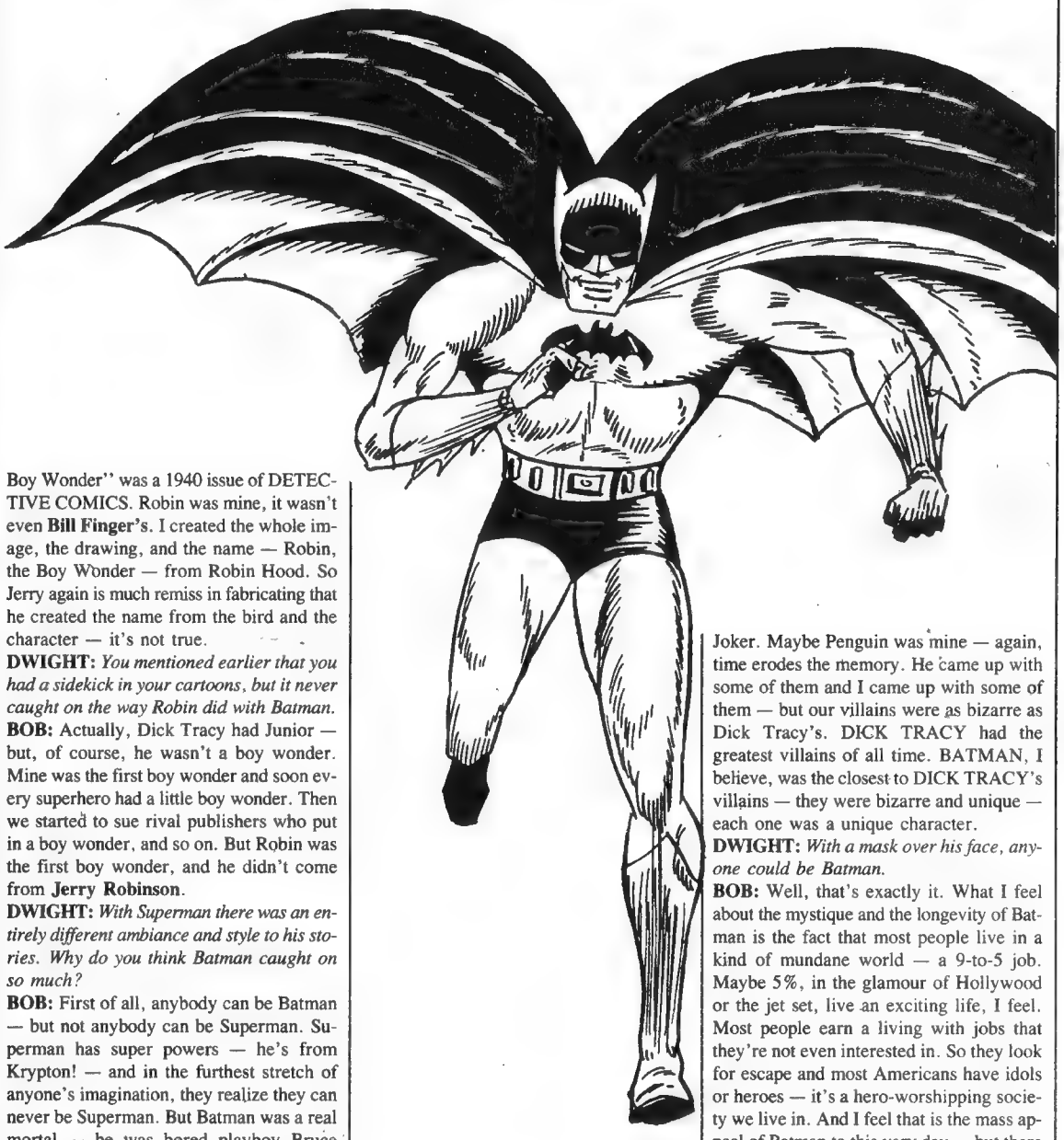
A secret ingredient in the controversial origin of the Joker: Conrad Veidt as THE MAN WHO LAUGHED.



© 1968 National Periodical Publications

Photo: © 1925 Universal Studios

"Hugh Hefner inspired the BATMAN TV show."



© 1978 DC COMICS, INC.

Boy Wonder" was a 1940 issue of DETECTIVE COMICS. Robin was mine, it wasn't even **Bill Finger's**. I created the whole image, the drawing, and the name — Robin, the Boy Wonder — from Robin Hood. So Jerry again is much remiss in fabricating that he created the name from the bird and the character — it's not true.

DWIGHT: *You mentioned earlier that you had a sidekick in your cartoons, but it never caught on the way Robin did with Batman.*

BOB: Actually, Dick Tracy had Junior — but, of course, he wasn't a boy wonder. Mine was the first boy wonder and soon every superhero had a little boy wonder. Then we started to sue rival publishers who put in a boy wonder, and so on. But Robin was the first boy wonder, and he didn't come from **Jerry Robinson**.

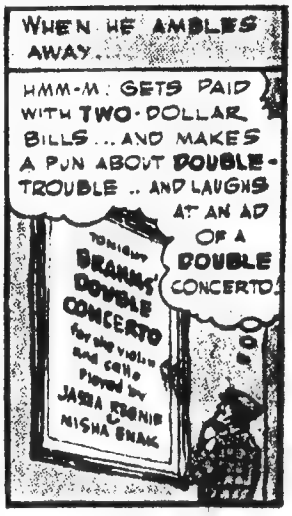
DWIGHT: *With Superman there was an entirely different ambiance and style to his stories. Why do you think Batman caught on so much?*

BOB: First of all, anybody can be Batman — but not anybody can be Superman. Superman has super powers — he's from Krypton! — and in the furthest stretch of anyone's imagination, they realize they can never be Superman. But Batman was a real mortal — he was bored playboy Bruce Wayne during the day, emulating the bored count in ZORRO — and at night he wore this costume to scare the hell out of dastardly crooks, villains. Anybody could become Batman. He could be wounded, he bled — he was real. And I think the reality, plus the fantasy of the costume, plus Robin, plus all the other gimmicks, gave it the fantasy and the mystique that it has to this very day. The Bat Cave and the Batmobile and the Batarangs — it had a whole mystique about it, and great villains. The villains were greater than Superman's, I believe. They were much more memorable. **Bill Finger** created some of the villains: I believe he created the Penguin. Catwoman, I think he came up with. I came up with the Riddler and the Joker. Maybe Penguin was mine — again, time erodes the memory. He came up with some of them and I came up with some of them — but our villains were as bizarre as Dick Tracy's. DICK TRACY had the greatest villains of all time. BATMAN, I believe, was the closest to DICK TRACY's villains — they were bizarre and unique — each one was a unique character.

DWIGHT: *With a mask over his face, anyone could be Batman.*

BOB: Well, that's exactly it. What I feel about the mystique and the longevity of Batman is the fact that most people live in a kind of mundane world — a 9-to-5 job. Maybe 5%, in the glamour of Hollywood or the jet set, live an exciting life, I feel. Most people earn a living with jobs that they're not even interested in. So they look for escape and most Americans have idols or heroes — it's a hero-worshipping society we live in. And I feel that is the mass appeal of Batman to this very day — but there is still a tinge of reality in that Batman is a real human being. So they can see themselves as a Batman. As Superman, that's too far out. They might like to fly but realize they never can. Batman doesn't fly, he swings on a rope, and so on. I think that's the secret right there — getting away from one's dull life into the world of fantasy. I think that's why STAR WARS is popular, RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK — every-

"Adam West would love to play Batman today


WHEN HE AMBLES AWAY...
HMM-M: GETS PAID WITH TWO-DOLLAR BILLS ... AND MAKES A PUN ABOUT DOUBLE-TROUBLE .. AND LAUGHS AT AN AD OF A DOUBLE CONCERTO!
TONIGHT
BRAHMS' DOUBLE CONCERTO
for the violin and cello
Played by
JASHA REGNIF
&
NISHA ENAK

© 1971 National Periodical Publications, Ltd.

A disguised Batman tracks Two-Face through a concert poster featuring violin and cello virtuosos Regnif and Enak. Notice anything about those names?

body would like to be Indiana Jones or Batman — or Superman, even. And away from their dullness. Most people lead dull lives.

DWIGHT: *When did it hit you — what your contribution had been to comics?*

BOB: Well, I was one of the innovators.

DWIGHT: *But obviously when you created Batman, you didn't quite realize what you had done.*

BOB: Oh, you mean when I knew my legendary status in the comics... Well, in 1943 they did a BATMAN movie serial. It was kind of corny, but it was the first time I saw him in the movies. I remember taking my girlfriends and we'd go in for the late show and everybody would hoot for the hero and hiss the villains. It became...well, when you're young, your ego is much greater, I feel. And at that time — that was 1943, only a few years after '39 — I was still young, I was like 24 or so, and I started to feel a kind of immortality at that moment. And then they did another serial in '49. But the ego is a frail condition of the psyche. When you're up, it's great — and when you're down, it's less.

Popularity comes and goes in the world — this is one of the longest-sustaining comic-book characters of all time, along with Superman. But Batman was kind of a fading character in the mid-'50s to late '50s. In fact, in 1965, sales were terrible. And then, all of the sudden, we had word that ABC was interested in doing a TV show on Batman. By then, sales were probably the lowest, in '65. But **Hugh Hefner**, we have him to thank for the TV show indirectly, inadvertantly. In the Playboy Mansion in Chicago at that time, for his diversion — he's always having parties and weekends, Saturday night, whatever — he thought it would be fun to string thirteen serial episodes of BATMAN together in a big popcorn session. And so he ran them off and all the Bunnies and his friends thought it was hilarious — it was so campy, they thought — and it was a large success. Somehow, it leaked out into the newspapers and then ABC heard about it, or maybe one of the representatives was over there or whatever, so somebody suggested it to ABC in New York and that started the idea. That's really how ABC got the idea.

DWIGHT: *Well, I heard that the executive producer on that, Bill Dozier, just saw BATMAN comics in an airport rack and picked some up as he was heading out to his plane and flipped through them...*

BOB: No. What happened is ABC wanted to get a producer. I don't know how they thought of **Bill Dozier**, but he came to New York and I met him at the Hampshire House for lunch one afternoon — and he said he had never seen a BATMAN comic book. So I said — and I guess a few other people suggested it also — why don't you read some on the plane back home? But the big credit that should come to **Bill Dozier** is because he made it campy. He would literally lift the comic book onto the screen — with the *POW!s*, *SOCK!s* and *BAM!s* — and that's what made the BATMAN TV show. That was the era of camp, of pop-art and **Andy Warhol** — if it had been done straight like SUPERMAN it never would have been the huge success it was. Many of my fans didn't like it that way, but many did. The older generation liked it and the college kids liked it — but a lot of dyed-in-the-wool early fans thought it should have been mysterious, not campy.

DWIGHT: *Speaking of pop-art, I heard that at the height of the era with Lichtenstein and all that, you did some of those fine art-style paintings as well?*

BOB: Yes, I have fine-art Batman paintings which I've shown. I did a set of lithographs for Circle Galleries, five Batman lithographs. And, in conjunction with the lithographs, I had art shows around the country. I have a lot of fine oils on Batman. Incidentally, I hang at the Museum of Modern Art, literally. They have two comic strips, a Sunday page and a daily of BATMAN which I donated, and it's in their sketch collection — it's not always hanging, but they've got it. I had an art show back in '69 and they took one painting of Batman and two comic strips — so I hang in the Museum of Modern Art, along with other universities in the country and other art museums.

© 1984 National Periodical Publications

March, 1937: A pre-Batman DETECTIVE cover.

Today, comic art has sort of come into its own — I'd say in the last 15 years or so.

DWIGHT: *It's quite a change from what happened in the '50s to comic books!*

BOB: Well, they were fading — but, you see, if you wait long enough, everything has a resurgence, I feel. Everything will come back eventually. It's kind of a spinning circle of life and clothing and styles and tastes — even on TV, Westerns will be back again — it's cycles, everything goes in cycles. If you wait long enough, or if you live long enough, you can see everything you ever did or thought about or wore — everything just comes back sooner or later.

DWIGHT: *With the BATMAN TV show, there was a fair amount of controversy around the casting of Adam West as Batman — what did you think?*

BOB: I thought he was perfect. He's very wooden and he's campy because he played it straight — he had to play it dead center — "Boy Scout time, all the time," was what **Bill Dozier** said. You have to play all the characters straight. Like, when **Neil Hamilton** as Commissioner Gordon said, "You know, Batman, the Joker has escaped and you'd better hurry over," it was like the atomic bomb was about to be dropped.

DWIGHT: *Did you meet Adam West?*

BOB: Yeah, I know them all. I see them out here. He's a very nice guy and, of course, he'd love to play Batman today, but I guess they want him a little bit younger — the way he was. And also, Hollywood is a strange town where Batman ain't the type to play Batman — this is Hollywood, truthfully.

but they want him a little bit younger."

© 1986 National Periodical Publications

DWIGHT: *Yeah, I heard the Al Jolson story — Al Jolson couldn't play himself.*

BOB: Well, he was a little old at that time, but they always use this *cliche* and it's true — if they would do the DEAN MARTIN STORY they would get **Frank Sinatra**, and for the FRANK SINATRA STORY they'd get **Dean Martin**. 'Cause **Frank Sinatra** ain't the type to play **Frank Sinatra**. That's an old *cliche* in Hollywood — but that's how they think, you know.

DWIGHT: *After you left BATMAN you got involved in animation with COURAGEOUS CAT?*

BOB: Yeah, I did COURAGEOUS CAT, that was in the mid-'50s. Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse are really Batman and Robin — that have a Catmobile, they came out of a cave like the Bat Cave. . . and the Frog was another cute villain — he was like **Edward G. Robinson**. They were little crime fighters — a very popular show — and they had a jazz soundtrack like PETER GUNN. It still plays in syndication around the country. And then I had a character called COOL McCOOL. And that was very cute but it was never that successful. I don't know. Maybe the animation was done in England and it wasn't American enough, but I liked it, too. It was sort of like GET SMART — bungling secret agents, which I always love. It was like Inspector Clouseau, actually.

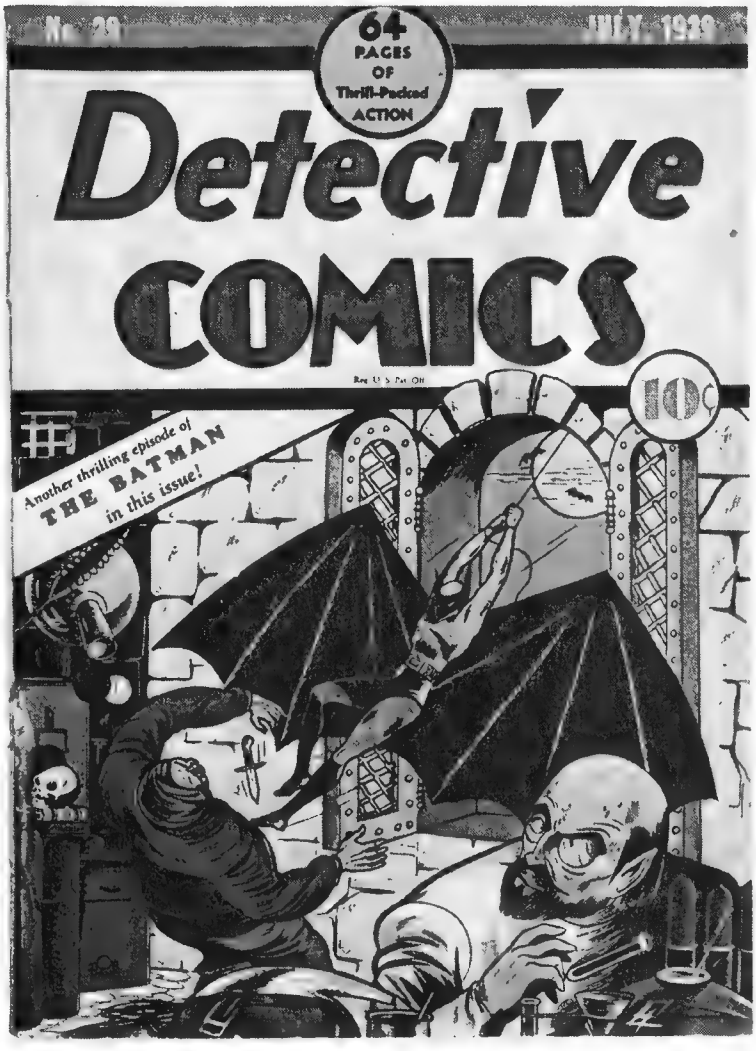
DWIGHT: *Did you ever do any live-action?*

BOB: I did a motion picture in the '60s with Paramount, SILENT GUN with **Lloyd Bridges**. I wrote that. It was about an ex-gunfighter who becomes a sheriff and he doesn't use the gun. He outwits the desperados in the west. There was too much violence going on at that time — **Robert Kennedy** was assassinated — and the FCC was down on violence. And you know the networks, they blow hot and cold. So when I came up with that idea, Paramount bought it, and it was supposed to go as a TV series. Yet the reason it didn't end up as a series was that they didn't think there'd be enough violence in there, in a show with a sheriff who did not use a gun! So there's that dichotomy again. They bought it because that was the thing to do at that time and then, a year later, when the pressure was off, they said, "Okay, back to the guns." And so, they couldn't do mine. Mine was THE SILENT GUN — and they wanted to put a gun in his holster again, but then you're defeating — you might as well have an ordinary Western.

DWIGHT: *Now you're a consultant on the Batman film?*

BOB: I'm the creative consultant on the picture.

DWIGHT: *I'd like to mention a few people from way back and have you give me some comments on them. Do you remember Harry Donnenfeld?*



July 1939: Batman's cleaners spared no wing starch in those days.

BOB: Oh, gosh, yeah. He called himself Superman. He was one of the publishers, along with **Jack Liebowitz**. And Harry was short of stature — a very nice man — and he used to call himself Superman, jokingly, I guess. He used to go to Florida a lot, and when I went down there in the early days I used to see him and we'd go to the track. He always treated me very nicely — I liked Harry, he's a very fine man.

DWIGHT: *You mentioned Jack Liebowitz?*

BOB: I liked **Jack Liebowitz**, also.

DWIGHT: *He's in his 80's but he is still quite active.*

BOB: Yeah, it's amazing. Well, he had a good life, let's face it. He had a lot of money. Is he married?

DWIGHT: *Yeah.*

BOB: That's his second wife. His first wife died of cancer many years ago. He still go to his business?

DWIGHT: *He's on the Board of Directors of Warner Communications, still active there.*

BOB: If you see him again, give him my regards.

DWIGHT: *He had some very kind things to say about you.*

BOB: What did he say? "Nice guy, Bob."

DWIGHT: *He said they tried to take care of you pretty well, in business arrangements. He thought very well of you.*

BOB: He thought he gave me a fair deal?

THE SILENT
INVASION
A SCIENCE FICTION MYSTERY
THEY'RE HERE, PEGGY!! WE'VE GOT TO WARN EVERYONE!!
FORGET IT, MATT!! I REFUSE TO BELIEVE ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR DELUSIONS!!
LOUNGE BAR
THE SILENT
INVASION
The Invasion Begins in April.
Coming from RENEGADE PRESS.

"DC gave me a lifetime contract!"

© 1986 National Periodical Publications

DWIGHT: *Yeah.*

BOB: Yeah, it was, considering it was sort of a life-time contract — you don't get too many of those, do you?

DWIGHT: *No, no. He said he even put you on the employee pension plan, as well.*

BOB: That's true. He took care of me. He's a tough businessman, I can tell you that — you had to, like, fight for the buck — but I guess in the final analysis I was taken care of. Of course, I never did like what happened to **Siegel** and **Shuster** with SUPERMAN. I don't feel that any publisher should own a copyright, I really don't. I think it's unfair. It should be 50-50. The creator should maintain 50% of the copyright.

DWIGHT: *Back then, with comics being such a young operation, no one quite understood what the possibilities might be.*

BOB: The potential of it. And when you're making good money — in those days, if you made five hundred dollars a week or six, seven, eight hundred — you were considered a millionaire and you weren't questioning copyrights.

DWIGHT: *Let me mention another name — Wheeler Nicholson?*

BOB: **Major Nicholson** still owes me about $400. See, the policy was that he wouldn't pay you at the beginning like DC did. DC, one thing about them — when you came in it was cash, COD. And, oh boy, that was a revelation in those days because, prior to that, you'd draw for these comic books and they'd say, "Come in at the end of the month and we'll give you a check." So you'd do 30 pages, and then they'd owe you, say, $10 a page — $300. And in those days $300 was like four or five thousand dollars today. So **Major Nicholson** owed me for three months, I remember this. Finally, he owed me about $500 — it was like $50,000 — and I really needed it. So he said come on up on a Saturday and I'll have a check for you. I lived in the Bronx, came down on the subway on a Saturday, went up to his office, and it was cleared out — empty. Gone. *Fini.* Could never find the man again, nor could anyone else that he owed money to — he absconded. That was **Major Nicholson** —so you brought up a real sore spot. Anyway, I guess that was the worst screwing I got.

DWIGHT: *Here's another name — Whitney Ellsworth.*

BOB: He came in after **Vincent Sullivan** as the editor at DC. Yeah, I liked Whit. He was kind of a gregarious, easy-going guy. We got along well. I think that Whit came in probably around '41. So BATMAN was rolling at that time. So it was **Vince Sullivan** around '39 who asked me to create Batman.

DWIGHT: *Vince Sullivan didn't last very long. He was fired from DC in 1940.*

DON'T FORGET TO TELL OUR NEWSBOY TO FORWARD THE PAPER WHILE WE'RE AWAY!
ZINGO! BATMAN OR HE COULD SAVE IT FOR US UNTIL WE GET BACK!
BOB KANE

BOB: Oh, why did he get kicked out? He was a nice guy.

DWIGHT: *Allegedly he was taking some of the writers and artists for DC and having them do stories for him and producing his own comic book. Jack Liebowitz found out about it and said, "Here are your walking papers."*

BOB: I remember a lot of companies wanted me to go over to their books and create a Batman for them, or whatever. But I was faithful. I figured I'd stay with this company because I was getting paid well. The only problem is — I wish I'd retained the copyright on it. I guess that's a sore spot for every cartoonist.

DWIGHT: *Well, you worked out a royalty arrangement with them, right?*

BOB: I have a good deal with them, yeah, a long contract. I worked out a royalty arrangement. I mean, I did well, but it's always a sore spot, whereby you'd like to own your own thing. But the past is dead. I think you have to extract the good out of it and not dwell too much on the negative, because it will only make you unhappy. Actually, I have a good life and, all things being equal, I guess I did better than most of the cartoonists in the comic books — probably better than anyone. So I can't honestly say I regret.

I went into a spiritual phase about fifteen years ago — metaphysical. I studied with gurus and you learn a philosophy of life where money isn't all and greed and avarice and dwelling on negativity and so forth — and you finally arrive at a philosophy for living. And there's more to life than just making money. Of course, being poor is no fun, but being a multi-millionaire doesn't necessarily make people happy. I know a lot of millionaires in Hollywood who are not happy and a lot of simple people who are.

EB'NN™

by Michael Dimpsey, Chris Ecker, Mike Schneider.

NUMBER TWO
ON SALE
NOW

He's *not* the blue-bird of happiness.

EB'NN TM & © 1986 DIMPSEY/ECKER

"I remember when I came up with the Joker."

TONY TOLLIN INTERVIEWS

JERRY ROBINSON

Once upon a time, a young journalism freshman named Jerry Robinson returned home to his one-room Bronx apartment. He was excited and intrigued by the news that the BATMAN feature he'd been assisting Bob Kane on was being given its own comic magazine in addition to its lead spot in DETECTIVE COMICS. Robinson hoped the new magazine would provide him with the opportunity to try his hand at writing some of the BATMAN stories, something that he'd been waiting to do for some time. Already, an idea was jelling in his mind, an idea for a new foe for the Caped Crusader. Robinson walked across his small apartment, searching until he found a deck of playing cards. Balancing a makeshift drawing board against a table, the young cartoonist began to sketch the new character's trademark...a playing card...THE JOKER!

JERRY ROBINSON: I felt that BATMAN needed a supreme arch-villain to test him. BATMAN was too good. It didn't push us visually or storywise unless we had someone of at least equal abilities to compete with him. Both SUPERMAN and BATMAN had been spending most of their time battling small-time gangsters and hoods; villains born out of the crime pictures of the era. There were no really major villains. BATMAN didn't need another crime lord like **Al Capone**. I felt he needed something more exotic; something that would fit in with the mysterious mood of BATMAN, the kind of BATMAN I was intrigued by. The strip needed an antagonist that would be more enduring; a continuing conflict in the literary tradition of Holmes and Moriarty or King Arthur and Mordred. In retrospect, it seems unbelievable that nobody had thought of that kind of concept for Superman or Batman before.

I can still remember the specific evening I came up with The Joker. I was up most of the night. I knew I had come up with something fantastic, and I immediately began to think up ideas for the first story.

All the essential elements were there. He was a diabolically sinister villain and yet had a clownish aspect. I found the very idea of a sinister clown utterly fascinating.

Bob liked the idea when I brought in the drawings the next day. He immediately sat down at his drawing board and began to sketch the full figure and round out the concept.

In a conversation with DC associate edi-

Interview copyright © 1975 National Periodical Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

"Bob Kane wanted to call Batman's sidekick

Another ingredient in the controversial Joker whodunnit: Jerry's original playing card sketch.

tor Nelson Bridwell, the late Bill Finger recalled the phone call when an excited Jerry Robinson first informed him of the new creation. Finger, the chief writer of the early BATMAN sagas, shared Robinson's enthusiasm but disliked the initial drawings of THE JOKER. Finger produced a still of Conrad Veidt torn from the movie edition of Victor Hugo's "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS." Veidt was made up as Gwynplaine, upon whose face kidnappers had carved a twisted, perpetual grin. Veidt's make-up provided the basis for The Joker as he appeared in BATMAN #1.

JERRY: Everybody liked the concept so much that they wanted to use it in the very first issue of BATMAN QUARTERLY. Deadlines were approaching so Bob asked **Bill Finger** to write it because I was going to Columbia at night, studying journalism and creative writing. Since my original motivation was to write the story, I was almost on the verge of tears. I was willing to stay up day and night for a week, or however long it took me to finish it.

In the end, I had to admit that Bob was right. **Finger** was by far the most experienced writer. I was very pleased that my creation was being used and Bill did do a brilliant job with it. I never did get around to writing any complete scripts for BATMAN. I soon became so absorbed with just the drawing that it became impossible to really do anything else except the writing assignments for my classes.

Bill Finger was a fantastic writer; perfect for the medium. The incident with the Veidt photo was very typical of Bill. If he had an idea concerning how something should be done, he'd always supply us with research from his files. Unlike most of the writers in the early comic book industry, **Finger** wrote very visually. If the story took place aboard an ocean liner, Bill would've researched the physical makeup of the ship and staged the action around that particular set. His were well-plotted and paced. He always strived for unique characters and situations and was never satisfied with the mundane. Bill's stories followed logically to their denouement and he deserves a large share of the credit for the success of the early **Batman** strip.

Although it was always, of course, Bob's strip, Bill and I submerged our own identities in BATMAN. The three of us were a BATMAN team. We'd get together and kick around ideas. One of us would get an idea and the others would take it and run with it. With that kind of rapport, you spark one another. It was to Bob's credit that he encouraged our creative participation. He had a great sense of flair and brilliant editorial judgment.

The story of Robinson's first meeting with Bob Kane is almost legend in the industry.

JERRY: I'd met Bob the summer after I graduated from high school; just before I was to enter the School of Journalism at Syracuse University. I'd been pedalling a bicycle cart, hawking ice cream, to earn my living expenses for the first year. Being the newest kid on the franchise, I had the worst route in the most remote suburbs. It was a deadly hot summer as I recall, or at least it seemed that way while I was pulling the refrigerated cart around. I was quite thin to begin with but after a summer of pedalling that cart, I must've been down to 67 pounds. My parents persuaded me to take a rest and I went off to a resort for the last week before I was to start college.

In those days, white painter's jackets were very popular with college kids, and students would paint all sorts of razzmatazz on their jackets. I decorated my own as I had been the cartoonist on my high school paper. I was wearing this jacket while waiting to play tennis at the resort when this fellow came up and asked who had drawn the cartoons. He turned out to be **Bob Kane**, whose BATMAN strip had just started a few months earlier in DETECTIVE COMICS. We hung

The Joker's first appearance — offered at auction for $10,000 this year in New York City.

FROM THE ARMOR THE JOKER!!
LUCKY FOR THE POLICE THAT THE VENOM SPRAY ONLY PARALYSES FOR THE WHILE ELSE THEY WOULD HAVE PERISHED LIKE WILDE! HE HAD NO SPRAY BUT A DEADLY ONE!

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

'Mercury' — I said 'Let's call him Robin.'"

© 1978 DC COMICS, INC. & Jerry Robinson

around together that week and he offered me a job as his assistant if I was willing to come to New York City. It seemed a great way to pay my college expenses so I moved to New York and transferred to Columbia University. Around October or November of 1939, I began lettering the strip and inking the background. After a while, I started to ink most of the figures as well, and pretty soon Bob would just pencil the strip and I would do the complete inking.

I remember those early days assisting Bob with a great deal of affection. Bob was a few years older than I was and I had a great deal of respect for his abilities. At the time, he was making the jump from humorous cartoonist to adventure artist. He made a remarkable transition in a very short period of time. Bob was very dedicated when it came to the strip and really worked on it. We were all working 17 or 18 hours a day on BATMAN.

To a young kid from a small town, Bob was awe-inspiring: tall, handsome, sophisticated, and extremely personable.

Bob and I would get together and talk about whatever young cartoonists talk about; Caniff, girls, BATMAN, girls, Foster's PRINCE VALIANT, girls, etc. I was a newcomer to the big city and he took me under his wing and our association opened a lot of doors for me.

It was Bob's idea to give BATMAN a kid sidekick. He wanted someone the young readers could identify with more readily than this masked, mysterious figure. It was a brilliant idea and we all saw enormous story potential in the new character.

When I came over, Bob had already started on some initial sketches of the new character.

His original idea was for something more along the lines of a super-costume, and he compiled a list of names mostly along mythological lines.

I think one of the names he was considering was Mercury.

I remember being immediately turned off. Something just wasn't right. I was of the opinion that BATMAN needed a more down-to-Earth, human partner, I felt we had to keep the distinction quite clear between the concepts of BATMAN and SUPERMAN and that BATMAN's young partner had to belong to the same genre as the Caped Crusader. It just didn't seem right to see him dressed in a super-costume.

I thought of BATMAN's new partner as a sort of young Robin Hood. "That's it," I said, "Let's call him Robin!" I remember plugging the name Robin against others that didn't seem quite as good. Once we agreed upon the name, I suggested adapting Robin Hood's costume for the new character.

I recall adding the final touch on Bob's sketch of Robin; the small "R" monogram on his vest. I did it in the same style I had been using for my caption lettering. When I redesigned the Batman logo, I adapted the old English type for Robin.

"VARIATIONS ON A THEME: NUMBER 28"

Copyright © 1978 by DC Comics Inc. and Jerry Robinson All Rights Reserved

People in the field immediately noticed the resemblance of the name, "Robin," to my own name, "Robinson." I remember receiving a lot of teasing about it and it bothered me at the time. When you're 17 or 18 and desperately trying to appear older, you don't want to be known as "The Boy Wonder."

As the demand for BATMAN stories increased, George Roussos was hired to help ink backgrounds while Jerry concentrated on the figures of BATMAN and the other characters. More and more of Bob Kane's time was being devoted to the syndicated BATMAN newspaper strip, so DC soon asked Robinson to work directly for them in the bullpen of 480 Lexington Avenue. Under the editorship of Whit Ellsworth, Jerry Robinson began to pencil many of the Batman stories and covers in addition to his inking chores.

Eventually, Robinson began taking on other comic-related assignments in addition to his DC work, frequently working in conjunction with his friends, Bernie Klien and Mort Meskin.

JERRY: There was a great deal of camaraderie in those days. I don't know if it exists to that extent in the business today. I used to share an apartment with a couple of cartoonists and it became the hangout for artists working against a deadline. Frequently, we'd have to work around the clock to get a book out.

Because of the wartime shortage, all sorts of deals were being made. A publisher would get hold of a few tons of paper through some devious means and immediately want to put out a comic book. We'd get a call on Thursday night that someone had obtained an allotment of rational paper but would lose the

Trademark and copyright 1986 Ron Fortier and Gary Kato

Coming This Summer From

OCEAN COMICS

"THE NEW WAVE IN QUALITY"

HE WANTS THE MOB OFF THE STREETS!

THE MOB WANTS HIM DEAD!

STREETFIGHTER is a 4 issue, 4 color mini-series sure to thrill the comics fan looking for something new and different. If you enjoy MYSTERY and ADVENTURE with plenty of martial arts ACTION and EXCITEMENT, you'll love STREETFIGHTER! Join this modern day crusader as he begins his war on the mobsters who would rule Metro City. Superbly written by Ron Fortier with dynamic art by Gary Kato and Bob Seppi, STREETFIGHTER is available at comic book speciality shops or by subscription.

Yes, I want to be part of the action, adventure and mystery. Please enter my subscription to all 4 issues of STREETFIGHTER. Enclosed is my check or money order for $7.00 (outside U.S., $9.80 in U.S. funds).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send To: Ocean Comics, Inc., 88 Tiernan Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886. All copies mailed in protective envelopes.

"Finger deserves a large share of the credit."

paper unless they could get a book to press by Monday morning.

A bunch of young cartoonists would get together over a weekend, kick around ideas, and invent five new characters for a book. Each one would be assigned a story and we'd work around the clock. On Monday morning, the finished sixty-four page comic book would be at the engravers.

Everybody would come over with their materials and improvise drawing boards around the room. We'd work in shifts. A few guys would be passed out on the couch and beds while the others were writing and drawing. You couldn't fit another cup in the sink and every dish in the place was dirty. We had an enormous double board and it wasn't at all unusual to find three guys working on that same board, literally drawing the same page. We didn't have time to wait for someone to finish so one cartoonist would frequently be pencilling the bottom of a page while another was inking the topmost portion.

When the golden-age DAREDEVIL was finally given his own magazine I was sharing a small studio across from Rockefeller Plaza with **Dick** and **Dave Wood**, **Charlie Biro**, **George Roussos**, and a few others. The weekend we had to get DAREDEVIL #1 out, New York City received one of the worst snow storms in its history. By Sunday, we were awfully hungry, and we decided to draw straws to decide who would go out and forage for food. They were gone for about six hours; in those days New York was pretty dead over the weekends anyway, but this weekend there was absolutely nothing open downtown. They had to dig their way down to Sixth Avenue and then trek down to 23rd Street before they found anything open. Finally, they located a luncheonette which managed to scrounge together a couple dozen eggs and a can of beans for some starving cartoonists on 51st Street.

They returned hours later to a loft filled with ravenous, half-dead artists and writers. Suddenly, it occured to us that we were in a bare office. We had absolutely nothing to cook food on. Finally, someone suggested building a small oven with the bathroom tiles. In desperation, we tore the tiles from the wall, built a tiny fireplace in the middle of the floor and fried the eggs on the makeshift oven. We didn't have a can-opener either so we banged open the can of beans using T-square and keys as hammer and chisels.

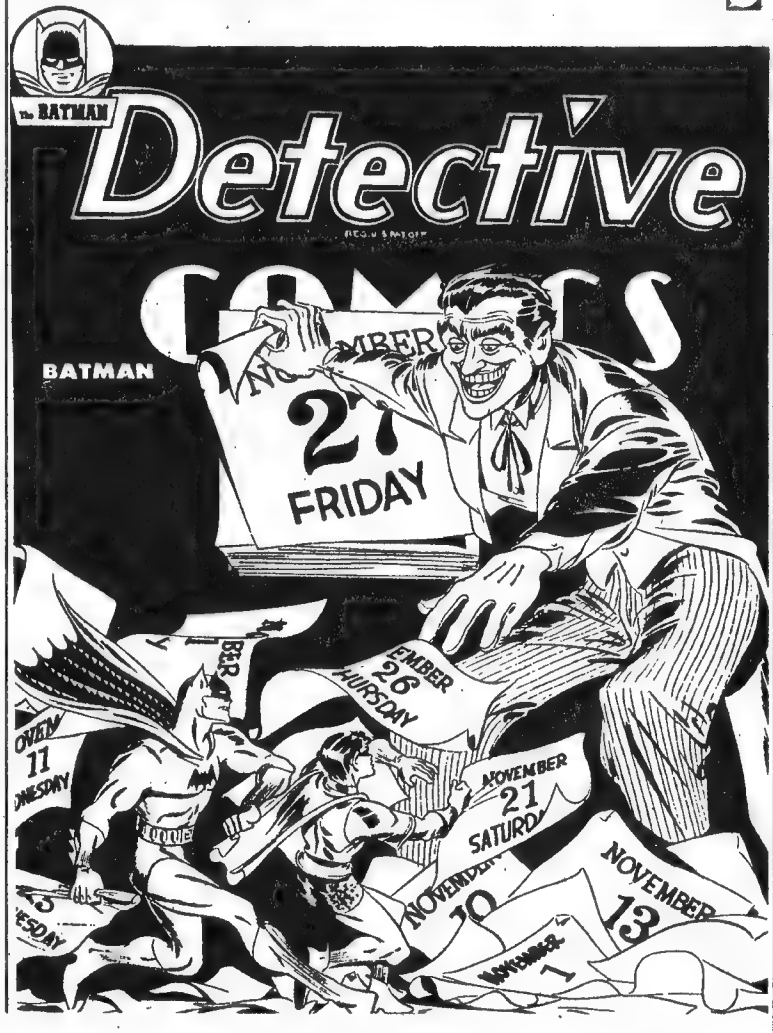
Scattered throughout the studio were coffee cans and cigarette butts and a number of binoculars. We needed the binoculars in the early morning hours when the showgirls came home. There were a number of nightclubs in the vicinity of our studio and also quite a few rooming houses. Our studio faced the back of a string of brownstones. We'd take turns with the binoculars because the girls started to get home around 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. As soon as one of us spotted something interesting, everyone would rush for their binoculars to watch their own private late show. After awhile, we began to sketch the girls.Gradually, we got to know them and began to send them the sketches we'd been doing. Most of them were quite amused, and would drop by and visit our studio after work.

It was a terribly exciting time to be in the industry because very often we were doing something that hadn't been done before; discovering a new way to visualize something or a new type of panel breakdown. In that way, it was a lot like the early days of film. We were all learning how to draw and were obsessed with getting movement onto the printed page. This was the era immediately following the pulps which had very static illustrations. Comic Art was a medium where you could show action and motion.

Film was a great influence upon us at the time. It was the only other young, moving graphic medium. We felt that **Orson Welles** was using the same types of devices in CITIZEN KANE that we were experimenting with on the printed page, and this served as a kind of reaffirmation that we were on the right track. If a recognized artist like **Welles** was doing it, then we had to be doing something right. Eventually, we learned that **Welles** himself was a great comics fan.

I had always been an avid fan. My father had owned a movie theater when I was a kid. My earliest memories are of going to the theater and sitting on the bench next to the piano player, my eyes glued upon the screen.

As his outside commitments became greater, Robinson found himself able to devote far less time to BATMAN. Eventually, he did little more than the regular Alfred feature in the back of BATMAN. More and more of his time was being devoted to advertising and straight illustration.



© 1940 Detective Comics, Inc.

"I used to erase Bob Kane's backgrounds and

George Roussos, a soft-spoken man with an ever-present brush in his hand and twinkle in his eye, occupies a small, dark room in Marvel's labyrinth of offices, where four days a week he colors virtually all of the covers that Marvel publishes. A top colorist on staff for the past 13 years, George has had a long and varied career since the heyday of comics in the 1940s, when he worked at the Bob Kane studio on BATMAN. He has pencilled, inked, lettered and colored comic books for a host of publishers, and worked closely with many of the top talents in comics, preferring to remain out of the limelight himself...

MARK GRUENWALD: *What was the first comic-book company you worked for?*
GEORGE ROUSSOS: I answered an ad for **Bob Kane** who was doing BATMAN for National. There were about sixty of us who applied for the job as art assistant.
MARK: *Kane had his own studio?*
GEORGE: Right. In the New York Times building.
MARK: *How many people were working in this studio?*
GEORGE: Just **Jerry Robinson** and then me. Jerry was doing inking for Bob, but he needed a background man and a letterer. I had been practicing to be an assistant for a syndicated strip artist — lettering and background inks. So, when **Bob Kane** saw my samples, he hired me over the others, since he wouldn't have to teach me anything. Plus, the first story he gave me was about railroads, and I used to draw railroads all the time.
MARK: *Bob Kane didn't work at his own studio?*
GEORGE: No. Bob would work at home. It was hard to make the deadlines, because Jerry was a heavy sleeper. I used to have to go to the Bronx to get him to come to work. I'd go and wake him up 2 o'clock in the afternoon so we could work all night. **Bob Kane**'s father — an insurance broker — used to drop in and see how we were coming along. We were committed to do about 13 pages a week. Jerry was always behind — he was always whiting out things and re-inking them. Bob's stuff was so sketchy, Jerry had to do a lot of work. My work was quite easy. I used to erase Bob's backgrounds and put my own in. I'd put big moons in and make the shadows large and full. I did shadows for effect, rather than realism. It gave the strip its unreal look.

So, Bob's father would come down to see how many pages we finished and deliver them to National for us. We used to hide the pages underneath the NEW YORK TIMES so he couldn't see how much we had left to do. We called him "The Detective," since he always found them anyway. National wanted more Batman material — it was quite popular — so they called us into the office and made us a deal. We wanted to pick up other work outside, but they didn't like the idea, so they offered us a lot of money to work at the office where they could keep an eye on us. Since Jerry and I had developed such a strong artistic look for **Kane** — always a big moon with harsh lights and shadows — they didn't want us to use that style for anyone else. We had worked with this fellow, **Bob Wood**, who later did the

AS A SHOT WHISTLES PAST, ROBIN TAKES A STONE FROM HIS BELT AND PLACES IT IN A QUEER-LOOKING INSTRUMENT — THE SLING SHOT
SHOOT HIM!
LIKE DAVID FIGHTING GOLIATH, ROBIN FIGHTS THE GANGSTERS!
A BULL'S-EYE!
AN AMAZING LEAP
A SWEEPING SWING...
...AND THE YOUNG DARE-DEVIL LANDS AMONG THE MURDEROUS GUNMEN
WHAT'S IT'S ONLY A KID!

Big moons and shadows provided a backdrop for the first Robin story from 1940.

GEORGE

© 1940 Detective Comics, Inc.

put my own in — big moons and shadows."

© 1940 Detective Comics, Inc.

USING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JU-JITSU, TAUGHT BY THE BATMAN, THE PLUCKY BOY PUTS UP A STIFF FIGHT AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS!
OOOOEEK, ROBIN SLIPS!
BUT AS THE GANGSTER STEPS ON ROBIN'S FINGERS, THE WONDER BOY TWISTS HIS BODY UP AND AROUND THE GIRDER
WITH A SUPER EFFORT THE BOY WONDER TWISTS AND MANAGES TO CATCH HOLD OF A LOWER GIRDER BAR.
SLIPPED, EH, KID? TSK! TSK! WELL, YOU'RE GONNA SLIP SOME MORE--AFTER I STAMP ON YOUR FINGERS!
SAY YOUR PRAYERS, BUDDY!
A WISE KID, EH? LET'S SEE YOU GET OUT OF THIS--
KICKING THE GUNMAN OFF THE GIRDER INTO SPACE!
CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

Originally credited to Bob Kane, but revised to add Bill Finger's name when DC republished it in 1974.

ROUSSOS

original DAREDEVIL, on a feature called TARGET AND THE TARGETEERS. Bob was just starving at the time trying to meet his deadlines, so I used to stay up all night for 2 or 3 days in a row while everyone fell asleep, helping out.

With us the TARGETEERS strip began to move. And it was in a style similar to **Bob Kane**'s awkward style of drawing. Jerry would ink the figures, I'd do backgrounds and when we got through, the end product was almost identical to **Kane**'s BATMAN. The lettering was the same, the balloon shapes, the inking, and the blacks. When the sales started to pick up, National realized we were competing with BATMAN. That's when they called us in, and they said "listen, we'll give you all the money you want. Why don't you come to work just with us?" It was better for me that way because then I'd get a check from the office, not from **Bob Kane**.

Kane used to do a funny thing. We'd get paid every Friday afternoon, but we had to pick it up before 5 o'clock. He was Jewish, though not very strict in most respects, and for him the Sabbath began exactly at 5. So, Jerry and I would have to take a subway train to get our check. But if we'd walk in a minute after 5, he'd say "Sorry, no check." You can see why I was glad to get paid from National.

MARK: *Who was the editor of BATMAN at the time?*

GEORGE: When I started it was **Whitney Ellsworth**, who later left to go to Hollywood when they were doing the SUPERMAN TV show. He was a very good editor, more clever than most of them. If you did good work and followed the basic guidelines it was a feather in his hat, so he never bothered you. He gave writers and artists a lot of freedom.

MARK: *How often did you see BATMAN writer Bill Finger?*

GEORGE: Only once or twice. He liked me right away. He was the one who told Bob to hire me. He saw the trains that I did and said they were close to what he had asked for in the script. What was good about Bill was that whenever he wrote a plot, he did a lot of research for it. Whether the setting was a railroad station or a factory, he would find photo reference, usually from NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, and give Bob all the research to draw from. He was very orderly and methodical. His only problem was that he couldn't sustain the work. . .he couldn't produce material regularly enough.

MARK: *He just couldn't keep up with the deadlines?*

GEORGE: He had a certain nervousness. He was always finding excuses how not to get to the typewriter.

MARK: *But generally, Bill would deliver a finished script?*

GEORGE: Then **Bob Kane** would interpert it, and change some things.

MARK: *So, how long did you work for National?*

GEORGE: Well, I worked 30 years for National, as I recall. There were some changes in between. I did other stories for other companies. I worked a couple of years with **Jerry Robinson** later on. We used to do Harvey Comics. We used to do the GREEN HORNET newspaper strip for a while, but it didn't go over too well.

"Batman only works as a character if the

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

DARK

world is a malevolent, frightening place."

KNIGHT

While living in Vermont and plotting to enter the comics industry, I ran into an old friend of mine who said she'd married someone whose brother was in the comics business. Excited at the chance to make a new contact, I asked for her husband's name. "Steve Miller," she said. Naw, couldn't be, I thought. Or could it? Yup, it was... I found Frank in his Hollywood home, eager to discuss his Great American Superhero Opus — the Dark Knight series, which explores the Batman of twenty years from now.

MARK BORAX: *How far are you along with the Dark Knight series?*
FRANK MILLER: I'm finishing up the pencils on the third book right now. There are four books in all, each one's 48 pages.
MARK: *Is the fourth issue plotted?*
FRANK: Oh, yeah, as a matter of fact, from the very beginning of the series the one that was the most prepared was the fourth — I've had this one all written and drawn in my head. I can't wait to get to it.
MARK: *You started with the ending and worked backwards?*
FRANK: More or less, yeah. That's very

"Superman & Batman have been enemies for

often the way I work. I figure out where I want to get, and the fun part is figuring out how to get there. Very much the same with the writing I'm doing on DAREDEVIL now, the resolution of the storyline was my starting point.

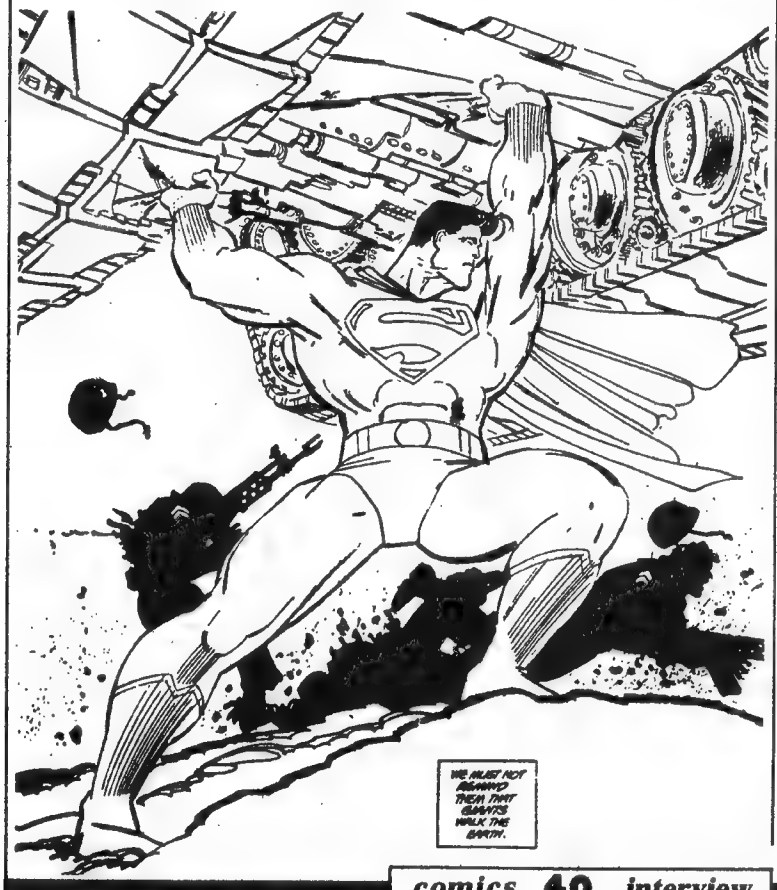
MARK: *In the process of working toward the resolution of Dark Knight, did the resolution change any?*

FRANK: It's changed in detail, but the substance of it is very much the same as it originally was. Well, that's not entirely true — originally, *very* originally, when this was just a single graphic novel idea that I talked over with **Dick Giordano** on a plane flight to Dallas, it had a much different ending. But as the project became defined as the Dark Knight, a story about Batman in his fifties, it blossomed to become an operatic conclusion to the superhero genre. Very strong, very operatic. A number of important elements in the story have changed. Originally I intended to avoid the whole issue of Superman because I thought he was just too preposterous to be a part of everything, that his presence would dwarf Batman. But then I realized I couldn't ignore him.

MARK: *Because of their friendship?*

FRANK: Well, I don't see them as friends — that's part of what this mini-series is about. My problem with Superman in the beginning, with Superman and Batman being in the same story, is that they each imply completely different points of view. Superman implies a benevolent world — Batman implies a malevolent world. However, as I thought about it and worked on it I found solutions to that, I found ways to use Superman's thirty year history, to use the paradoxes and outright contradictions in the legend, to make it conceivable that Superman could exist and yet the world could still be a lousy place to live in. *(Laughter.)* I'm very happy with the solution. As a matter of fact Superman is now crucial to the resolution of the series. I stress that Superman and Batman are enemies, and it is implied that they have been enemies for decades — that they've never liked each other. I cannot see two personalities like that getting along, acting friendly. Batman has tremendous contempt for Superman because he's such a "good boy," because he takes orders, from the President, among other people. And Superman, frankly, is scared of Batman. Because Batman represents, to a certain extent, his own dark side.

MARK: *Which Superman doesn't want to look at?*



FRANK: Right. Clark turned out to be a really fun character to write. I think I've managed to keep him in tune with the character as he's been presented over the years, but from a completely different slant, because this is Batman's series. So we see him more or less through Batman's eyes, and his opinion of Superman is very different than the one you generally see.

MARK: *Will we be seeing a lot of Superman in the four issues?*

FRANK: He doesn't appear until the third one, but from then on he's a major force in the series — he permeates it. Particularly the fourth one. I had originally planned on dismissing him out of hand, just simply coming up with some excuse that got him off the planet at the time the adventure takes place, but he moved back in on it, and he turned out to be a ball to write all along! I mean, here you have the two strongest superheroes ever created, the only two that have really lasted for fifty years, and they both had to be a part of this series because it is such *gotterdammerung* for the whole superhero idea. It's set at a time in the future when the superhero has been all but outlawed — taking the DC universe and bringing in a bit more political reality. Superman is something of a federal agent, and the whole problem with Batman is that he makes no compromises along the way. When he comes out of retirement he acts exactly as he did the first time he put on the costume. Except he's a bit less patient now because he's only got a certain amount of time left.

MARK: *He's outlived his usefulness?*

FRANK: Well, that's one of the key points in the story — everyone thinks so, but when the superhero is based on something as primal as Batman is, his usefulness could never be outlived. The central conflict of the story is the world versus Batman.

MARK: *Will DC be using your Robin outside this series?*

FRANK: I would rather they didn't because I love the character, so I feel very territorial about her. She's a very different concept for Robin than what we're used to. This isn't a ward of Bruce Wayne's, this isn't a junior Batman. Carrie has her own personality, her own life, her own focus, and she is very very young — she's thirteen. She is very intelligent, very modern, so she has many things to teach the Batman, while she's learning from him. I found that introducing her completes Batman as a character. I had always thought that Robin was a real pain-in-the-ass, but I now realize what a brilliant creation it was, because it really does give a human context to Batman's character. If Batman is done properly, he's such a powerhouse that he needs —

MARK: *A restraining figure?*

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

decades. They've never liked each other."

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

ONE-STEP STREET PIZZA.
MAXIMUM CHECK-OUT.
WIND'S ACES. AND THE LEDGE ISN'T TOO MUCH SMALLER THAN A BALANCE BEAM.
SURE. JUST SLIPPERY AND ABOUT A MILE UP.

"I had always thought Robin was a real pain-in-the-ass."

FRANK: Yeah — and just a human to be with him, especially a brightly-colored child. Somehow it all works out better, as perverse an idea as it is that a grown man would drag a child into the bullets! But it works very well, the chemistry is solid. I think that back when they introduced Robin to the BATMAN series it was a very good move, and it's had something to do with the character's staying power.

MARK: *Will you be using your Robin for any other projects?*

FRANK: I don't know. One of the things I'm learning is that a good character begs to have stories told about him or her — but it's not always a good idea to do so. For instance, in the course of doing DARK KNIGHT I have produced many many things that I've edited out. To produce each 48 pages of the series, I produced close to a hundred pages of scenes that I whittled down panel by panel, distilled them to the very least that could be put in. Much like editing a film. I take the sheets of paper on which I lay out the job, and I cut them with scissors, removing as much as possible until all that's left is the absolute essence, or as close as I can get to it. I've never done anything so structured, so timed as this series. I really feel it's a very orchestrated story.

MARK: *Is that why you called it "operatic?"*

FRANK: Mainly I was referring to the scope when I said that — it feels so much bigger than anything I've done. The whole world is involved in what goes on. Comic-book writers have largely avoided taking their material so seriously that they show what its social consequences would be, and that particular question is the most fascinating one for me in the series.

MARK: *Certain writers have tried to bring in social context — Claremont's graphic X-Men novel GOD LOVES, MAN KILLS comes to mind. How is DARK KNIGHT different?*

FRANK: It's different in that, while television news is used sometimes as an accent, or as something to anchor your story in reality, very rarely in any kind of fiction on this level can you actually show the consequences of it, because the world would actually be changed by the presence of these figures.

MARK: *You mean the world of people who watch these news shows?*

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Frank Miller
Born: 27 January 1957; Olney, Maryland
Occupation: Cartoonist
Residence: Hollywood, California
Favorite Novel: RED HARVEST by Dashiel Hammett
Credits: Gold Key, various low-key horror comics; DC Comics: RONIN, DARK KNIGHT series; Marvel Comics: DAREDEVIL, ELEKTRA, WOLVERINE

FRANK: For instance, **Bernard Goetz**, in New York, changed the color of New York life for a few weeks. He pulled something up out of what was going on, common to people's emotional states. What he actually did, as far as shooting the four youths, was a crime in itself that would have been very forgettable. But something was implied by it, represented by it.

MARK: *He became a symbol.*

FRANK: Yeah. And with Batman we're talking about someone who is the *epitome* of the symbolic character — the will to resist. We're seeing this pop up constantly in fiction right now. There are movements in society, spiritual movements, that sort of thing, and widespread forces. I think that, at their best, superheroes can represent these kinds of forces. Batman represents a very powerful specific force that movie-makers attempt to represent with Dirty Harry, Paul Kirsey in DEATH WISH.

MARK: *Symbols to give people a chance to act out their own violent urges?*

FRANK: That's one way I think the idea has been misrepresented. I don't think it's necessarily a simple violent power fantasy. Society has made itself impotent to the point where people do not resist evil on a large level, particularly violent crime. New Yorkers carry bribe money to buy off their muggers. I think there is a desire right now that the intelligentsia aren't aware of and can't relate to — the desire to take back the power that we've given away as human beings, to say no to criminals and to the less overt evils we're surrounded by. This naturally has led

Frank Miller talks about Will Eisner

"The reprinted adventures of Denny Colt instruct and entertain always. The newer pieces provide us with the challenging, even revolutionary, work of comics' most accomplished creator. Mr. Eisner, you are my two favorite storytellers."

—letter to *Spirit* magazine No. 31

"[With Elektra], I wanted Daredevil to have a female antagonist, like Sand Saref in *The Spirit*. In fact, I ripped off the first Sand Saref story to do the first Elektra story. Rather than just regurgitating it, though, I put a harsher edge on the conflict."

—interview in *The Comics Journal* No. 70

"I've studied Eisner's work in particular...I've studied it intensely over a long period of time because he does it all. His work succeeds on every level. I find his stories good to study simply as stories, often, and his storytelling to be crucial to an understanding of the form. The work he's doing now is fascinating to me because it's breaking new ground with the form, which isn't really being done anywhere else that I've seen."

—interview in *The Comics Journal* No. 70

Frank Miller is a bit of a groundbreaker himself, with *Daredevil, Ronin,* and now *The Dark Knight* series. If you'd like to see what Frank Miller studies intensely, we suggest:

THE SPIRIT monthly comic book, reprinting four classic tales, and featuring Will Eisner commenting on each issue's stories.

WILL EISNER'S QUARTERLY, printing Eisner's new, more experimental work.

Eisner is a master other artists look to for insight and inspiration. More important, he is a great, entertaining storyteller. Find out what Frank Miller knows. Read *The Spirit* and *Will Eisner's Quarterly*. From:

Kitchen Sink Press

"There's not enough *real* sex going on!"

to a very strong need for heroes that hasn't been met at all because artists, particularly in the film industry, don't know how to present a hero, they don't know how to make one. They've castrated their heroes to the point where they actually think that the basic appeal of Superman is as 1940s nostalgia. This sugary sweet obnoxious character...

MARK: *The Saturday morning cartoon Superman.*

FRANK: Right! They don't realize that Superman was created during the Depression in response to a feeling of powerlessness, as an unconscious statement by the boys who made him up, that we *do* have power! Superman was the common man, he wasn't a big bromide who flew around and fixed dams when they broke — he fought battles for the rights of people. Many of his early stories are anti-war statements. They make the very strong point that in war, men are murdered by their own government! Superman would drag generals to the front line of battlefields so that they'd be in danger and realize that their men were. Superman fought corrupt employers, robber barons, he actually represented something — the common man. So does Batman, but in a very different way, a much darker way. Batman represents the buried rage that has got people quivering these days. The ability of people to choose *not* to be a victim. I'm not just talking about crime. Over the past fifty years the idea of superheroes has been completely corrupted. The writers have forgotten what the material is. It's been a very intense process of investigation for me to discover —

MARK: *What went wrong and how to right it? You don't want superheroes mowing their lawns on weekends anymore?*

FRANK: Exactly the sort of thing that comes from TV mentality. TV writers, in particular, more so even than movie writers, trivialize everything. The term we hear around these parts is "relatable," asking whether something is relatable or not. Meaning, does the character pick his nose and eat pizza! The entertainment writers generally have a very difficult time capturing the positive elements of life. A hero is, by his nature, above and beyond the rest of us. People want to be cheered on by a Superman or a Batman. Instead, what we get is a Rambo, who seems to cheer us on to a nuclear war. I think heroes serve a very good purpose. It's a failure of the writers of our generation and the one before us, in every field, that's made people think that the hero is dead and can't be resurrected except as a nostalgia item. Look at how Romance has been dismembered into Adventure, Love Stories, and so on, when actually Romance is a form of fiction along the lines of GONE WITH THE WIND, ROBIN HOOD, where adventure *and* love are all wrapped up together.

MARK: *Such as the Romantic movement in art and literature?*

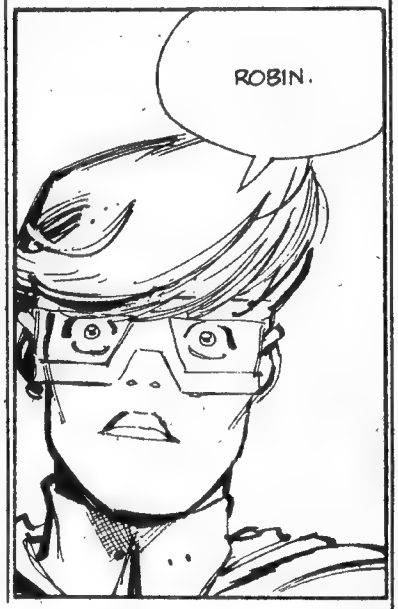
FRANK: Right! My complaint with **Spielberg** and **Lucas** is that they make adventure a juvenile form, they keep any adult emotions out of it. That's a recent development in fiction, you know.

MARK: *Right — 'cause when you look at Errol Flynn's ROBIN HOOD there's nothing juvenile about it.*

FRANK: Not at all! For one thing, there's genuine heat between him and Marion, there was rivalry, real passion there. I can't really say that Indiana Jones had passion for **Karen Allen**. She was just too girlish.

MARK: *Like the fantasies of the twelve-year-old.*

FRANK: Yes, and it's even more extreme in the case of STAR WARS, where you have a love triangle straight out of ARCHIE comics. I'm not crazy for sex scenes in film, because generally they don't serve a dramatic purpose, they're used as a shortcut by lazy writers, but I still don't think there's enough real sex going on.



© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

$1.75
$2.25
Canada

#1 SUPER TEAM OF THE SOUTH!

SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #12: Dragon--alias Mark Dagon--faces an unknown foe who has gone through very elaborate preparations to destroy him. Caught by surprise, Dragon is unable to defend himself. His only hope lies with his fellow Knights--who know nothing of what has transpired! 1st of two parts.

SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #13: The remaining Knights--Connie, Kristin and Electrode--follow a trail that leads them, not to their teammate, but to a surprise ally.

SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #14: The return of the first super-villain the Knights ever faced--Dread! They were only able to defeat Dread because Dragon is unaffected by his awful power. This time, Dragon isn't there! How can the Knights hope to defeat Dread without him?

A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION
FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD. • 234 FIFTH AVE. • SUITE 301-G • NEW YORK, NY 10001

"HILL ST. BLUES is lazy and slow."

MARK: *Even if it's just intimated.*

FRANK: That's right — sex doesn't necessarily have to mean the sexual act! Lynn and I were talking about this the other day and she made the point that Rhett Butler and Scarlet O'Hara set furniture on fire when they walked near each other, without a scrap of nudity. I don't necessarily object to nudity, I just think it's rarely done for the right purpose. I've become a proponent for the resurrection of the Romantic Adventure, or more specifically, romance, because the word originally implied a sense of adventure. Somewhere along the line, "romantic" became a synonym for "unrealistic," because it's essentially an optimistic hopeful form, but these are not optimistic hopeful times. I believe fiction can be optimistic, hopeful, *and* realistic at the same time, it's just that we can't write romances like they used to be written since we're not in the same world. Nonetheless, in my own life and in other people's I've witnessed, I've seen the forces that move people are often romantic. I really believe that most people are aching for a revival of this — a very non-nostalgic, contemporary, forceful Romantic movement in art and entertainment. Anyhow, I'm aching for it.

MARK: *So the title DARK KNIGHT implies bringing romance back to The Batman?*

FRANK: Very much so — a sense of stature, of heroism. I've become more and more aware of how my own work revolves around the idea of a hero. This story is very much a Romance in the classic sense, which is a statement that may confuse people because it's not exactly full of sexual material.

MARK: *How is your working style on DARK KNIGHT different than your working style on RONIN?*

FRANK: It's very, very different. For one thing I'm not doing that much of the job. The other thing is that RONIN made this project possible. RONIN is the biggest project I've ever done — it taught me more than anything I've ever done. It showed me that the comic book form can take on the values of a novel, and it showed me a lot of how to do it. I waste less time now because I'm surer of my footing. Another major difference is that Batman is much more of a crowd pleaser.

MARK: *You're back in the popular mode again.*

FRANK: Yes — in that sense, it's less ambitious. I'm much more in control of it as it develops.

MARK: *You're applying what you learned out of the pop mode back into it.*

FRANK: Um-hum. I learned a lot about my craft, a lot about the form. I also gained a distance from the material that I hadn't had for years.

MARK: *Superhero material?*

FRANK: Yeah, I hadn't read comics for many years before I started writing them. I'd stopped when I was about twelve years old. Then I went into working full time on superheroes and became immersed in the Marvel superheroes, Daredevil. Doing RONIN took me out of that world again and I was able to look at it and realize there was a reason for all my frustrations with it, but also

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

ELITE COMICS

THE NEW "INDEPENDENT"

ELITE COMICS

THE STUFF DREAMS ARE MADE OF...

ALL TITLES IN FULL COLOR

4 ISSUE MINI-SERIES
BEGINNING
BIMONTHLY
JUNE

THE TWILIGHT AVENGER

BY JOHN WOOLEY, TERRY TIDWELL AND BUTCH BURCHAM

NOW MONTHLY

THE EPSILON WAVE

BY TOM FLOYD, CHUCK GEORGE AND JONNI PARKER

SEADRAGON

MONTHLY

BY RICHARD PAOLINELLI, CARL KNAPPE AND DENNIS YEE

ORDER NOW FROM YOUR DISTRIBUTORS!

"I can't stand heroes who snivel & whine."

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC

that the eight-year-old kid who went nuts over this stuff had a reason to! That the idea itself was strong and good, but it's been a failure on the part of the creators and publishers who made it die on the vine.

MARK: *The source material is valid but the treatment has been lacking.*

FRANK: Um-hum. Every significant move of the past thirty years has been toward poisoning or dissolving the idea of superheros. When America and the art world dove into a state of self-contempt the hero has lost everywhere. The hero only works for me in a human context. Humanity is really the only province of the material. When the hero is mundane, when there are 35 superheroes flying around in the story and no normal people at all, there's really no context — it becomes a fantasy detached from reality that doesn't interest me at all. Look at the real early superheroes — very strange unearthly figures.

MARK: *Primal, archetypal.*

FRANK: Yes, and in certain instances the hero is like an arc light cast on the situation, so that we can see more clearly. Most romantic writing, at its best, focuses and defines things.

MARK: *Less true to a "relatable" reality but more true to an internal reality?*

FRANK: Yes, and quite emotionally true. I can't stand the idea of a hero who snivels and whines and endlessly talks about his feelings! I don't know if it's because writers have been entering psychotherapy, I don't know the exact reason, but it's a failure of craft. The golden rule of writing, is that character is *action*, especially in a visual form. There's a bracing clean feeling when the characters define themselves by what they do rather than what they say.

MARK: *Actors know not to deliver their lines over a strong piece of stage action, because the audience will lose the words in favor of the movement.*

FRANK: Right. I think it's a conceit on the part of writers to think that the character work is strictly their domain and not the artist's. Strongest moments of character happen through action. The term "character scene," meaning that now some character is going to explain to you in precise detail exactly how he feels so you don't have to pay much attention while you read the story gets back to TV; just look at HILL STREET BLUES and you can see people talking about their feelings endlessly! It's lazy, it's slow.

MARK: *It's the behavior-modification era of fiction!*

FRANK: *(Laughter.)* In reality we do often have to talk about our feelings a great deal. It's entirely appropriate in personal situations.

MARK: *But usually of zero interest to anyone outside the living room!*

FRANK: Yeah. I often feel, with superhero comics in particular, like I'm at a party where I don't know anyone — or I'm at a group therapy session where I don't know anyone.

MARK: *Right!*

FRANK: I like to make use of internal monologue in a story when the character's feelings are counterpoint to his actions. Bruce Wayne, for the number of pages when he's retired, straining against turning back into Batman, has a very heavy narration because he's conflicted and he's a mess. As soon as he becomes integrated again —

MARK: *He shuts up?*

FRANK: He shuts up, quite a bit, and by the end of the series we have nothing but his actions to go by — and those are the clearest moments of character.

MARK: *If Batman began so strongly, where did they go wrong with the character?*

FRANK: I think the main mistake that was made with him is the main mistake that was made with all of them — they were published as monthly comic books for an audience of little kids, they trademarked them, turned them into toys — Batman couldn't be a decisive figure anymore. He has his root in the pulps, specifically THE SHADOW, and the comics industry has never really expanded beyond the monthly pamphlet aimed right at kids. Even though Batman was created for kids, his roots are in the pulps. There's two other reasons — one is they attached all kinds of things that didn't apply to the character —

MARK: *Was that a gradual process or did it occur overnight?*

FRANK: I think it tends to happen to characters as soon as they fall out of the hands of their original creators. Once **Bill Finger, Jerry Robinson** and **Bob Kane** were not working on Batman anymore the hand writing was on the wall. The second reason is that in comics they don't like to let anything run its course. Batman might just have been a character that would have died after the first ten years, and eventually been revived, but instead they converted him — you know, a Rainbow Batman, he went to other planets, all kinds of awful stuff got done to the character.

MARK: *The "new look."*

FRANK: Yeah, we had a new look — a yellow circle! Also, Batman — and this is where plotting the story has been so interesting — Batman only really works as a character if the world is essentially a malevolent, frightening place. The same is true of Dirty Harry.

MARK: *Theoretically, couldn't Batman work as long as he thinks the world is a malevolent frightening place?*

FRANK: Yeah, but then there's the question of whether he's a hero or a psychopath. I don't see him as a psychotic, I see him as a hero. The problem is that DC, like Marvel, has formed their massive universe with more superheroes than there are people, certainly than there are villains. It has an essentially benevolent quality to it, and in that context they have a choice with Batman — he can either become Dirty Harry, or he can become softer, mushier, nicer, in which case he just doesn't work as a character, and that's what's happened to him. I have to say that I think the DC people are aware of everything I'm describing. When I had discussed the character with Dick and **Jenette Kahn** specifically,

"Bruce Wayne is Batman's host body —

their response was very strong — Dick adores the character! He supported me entirely in this series. I was very worried because as I worked on it I became aware that the only way I could do this character was to absolutely be true to him. It meant giving him a much harder edge than he's ever had. For the idea to work logically for me, his methods couldn't be nice. He is essentially a terrorist superhero.

MARK: *How is he different than Dirty Harry?*

FRANK: Well, he doesn't murder people. There's a lot of similarities between the characters. Both are very decisive, they make crucial decisions that dedicate their lives to fighting evil. But I feel that Batman is a much larger character, a much larger hero inside — though not as he's published right now. As of now, Dirty Harry is a much larger hero because of **Eastwood**'s screen presence. I've said elsewhere that I believe **Eastwood** has a better idea of what a hero is than virtually anybody who works in comics. But to the level that Batman is essentially preposterous, he wears this big costume, he has these fantastic machines that he uses — he has to match that by being huge in his effect. He has to live up to that sort of image. If he's one of many clowns going around fighting criminals, and only fighting criminals in situations where nobody gets hurt, then it all gets that much more preposterous. I see too many pictures of him standing around hospital rooms or standing in restaurants. He's unearthly, a weird character, so clearly heroic but also with the special aspect of being like Dracula — coming and going mysteriously. Much of what he does to criminals is staged like a horror movie. He's the hero who acts like a villain — the *epitome* of the Dionysian hero, just as Superman —

MARK: *The Appollonian hero.*

FRANK: Right! In Christian terms, Batman commits evil to fight evil.

MARK: *What's Bruce's role in all of this?*

FRANK: Bruce is Batman's host body. Bruce Wayne died when he was about five years old, whenever it was that his parents got blown away. In my series I put forth the idea that he was always going to be Batman, that the parents' murder was as inevitable as him putting the costume on. In fact, I have an incident earlier in his life that foreshadows what's going to happen to him.

MARK: *Fate?*

FRANK: Fate. I definitely bring a mythic and mythological context to the character, which I think is entirely appropriate. He's definitely following a destiny. He has an otherworldly purpose. He's a priest, to a certain extent, or a monk. He's fighting what is in his mind a holy war, and during the ten years that he isn't Batman that precede my series, he's a dead man. Bruce Wayne goes through the motions but there's no one home. In the beginning of the series, in fact, Bruce refers to Batman as "him."

MARK: *With a capital "H"?*

FRANK: *(Laughter.)* Well, I don't take it quite that far! *(Laughter.)* They're all capitals in comic books! But he was born to do this, and whatever Bruce Wayne might have been is completely irrelevant. He's *not* out for revenge, which is often the way he's been described. I don't see him that way at all. I see him, in psychological terms, as a boy who had every bit of sense taken out of his life in one violent act, and has been forcing the world to make sense, to the extent that it can, ever since. In a deeper context, I see him as a mythological figure, as something of a god on earth, like Superman. I found that in writing him and Superman, despite Batman's physical limitations, that Batman has no trouble sharing the stage with, or even dominating Superman, that he's as huge a figure. I've really come to love the character. Back to what I was talking about before, I was nervous as it developed, because I knew that he had to be extreme in his actions, he had to be very convicted in his thoughts. I remember one time calling up Dick and saying, "Look — sooner or later we're going to have to deal with civil rights." I told Dick there were a number of legal and moral issues that the Batman character answered in a way that is not very hip right now, that does not necessarily follow our Constitution, either. I said that I felt his point of view had to be presented — that he couldn't toe the line. I didn't want to soften him any.

MARK: *You were worried about reader response or about DC editorial response?*

FRANK: I was worried about limitations with DC on how far I could take the character. The reaction that Dick had was that he wanted to hear everything I wanted to say. He wanted to know what point of view needed revamping. Then he completely approved it, and proceeded to give me advice on how to strengthen it. Dick is the editor of the project, and his motions to strengthen it made it even more severe. The format of the series, I believe, will put it out of the reach of most of the youngest readers, which is necessary. DC and I have worked together to redesign the graphic novel. Each of the four books is going to be a 48-page graphic novel, comic- book size in height and width, with square binding and all the other things you're used to from a graphic novel, just smaller pages. This allows it to retail at roughly half the price of a larger book. I believe that it also makes it a much more valid format for a much larger audience.

MARK: *And the paper stock?*

FRANK: Same as RONIN, which is the best I've seen anywhere in comics, in this country. We're taking it, not only creatively, but also on the level of production, as far as we can. Just like RONIN all over again, it's this atmosphere of wanting this book to be the best it possibly can. I have yet to compromise a single point. With RONIN I had been given a tremendous amount

© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

Bruce died when he was five years old."

© 1988 DC COMICS, INC

of latitude as far as their usual standards of self-censorship. That was appropriate — I was the creator and author of it, and that was pretty much the way we'd agreed to do it. With Batman, I came in and it was their character, and a character who was a continuous investment for them. But at the same time, they understood that I had something to contribute here. What's coming out of it is a Batman story that's very much unlike any I've ever seen. The political content would never have been done before this.

MARK: *Will we see a reflection of your characterization trickling into the monthly comic book?*

FRANK: Who knows? That kind of thing can never be predicted. I don't know if **Doug Moench's** continuing to write the monthly books, or whether some other people are coming in. People have their own opinion about these characters, and certainly DC has an editorial point of view. I only know that I'm presenting my version.

MARK: *You're also aiming at a slightly different audience than the monthly book?*

FRANK: Yeah, although I personally think this is the audience the monthly book should be aimed at. I don't really think a character who's that much based on a malevolent world is considered a kid's item. It *should* be a kid's item!

MARK: *Definitely.*

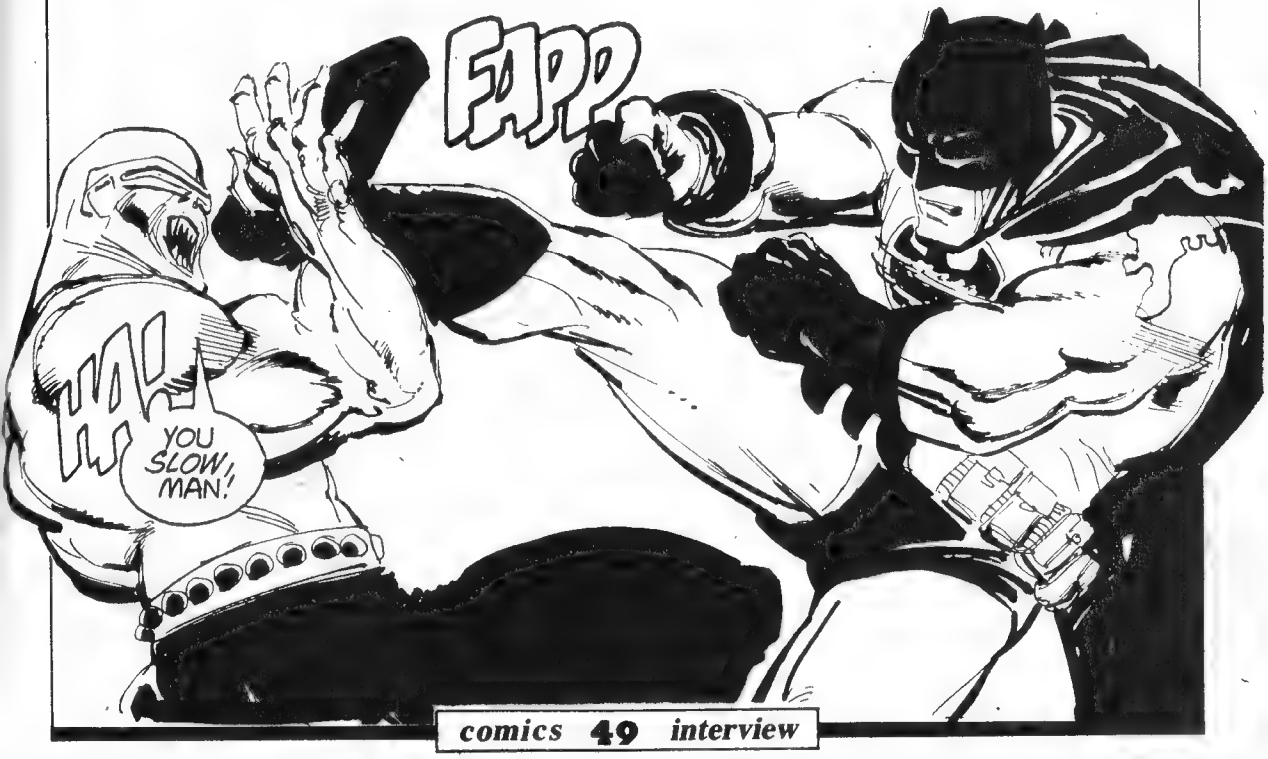
FRANK: Kids are a lot smarter than anybody gives them credit for.

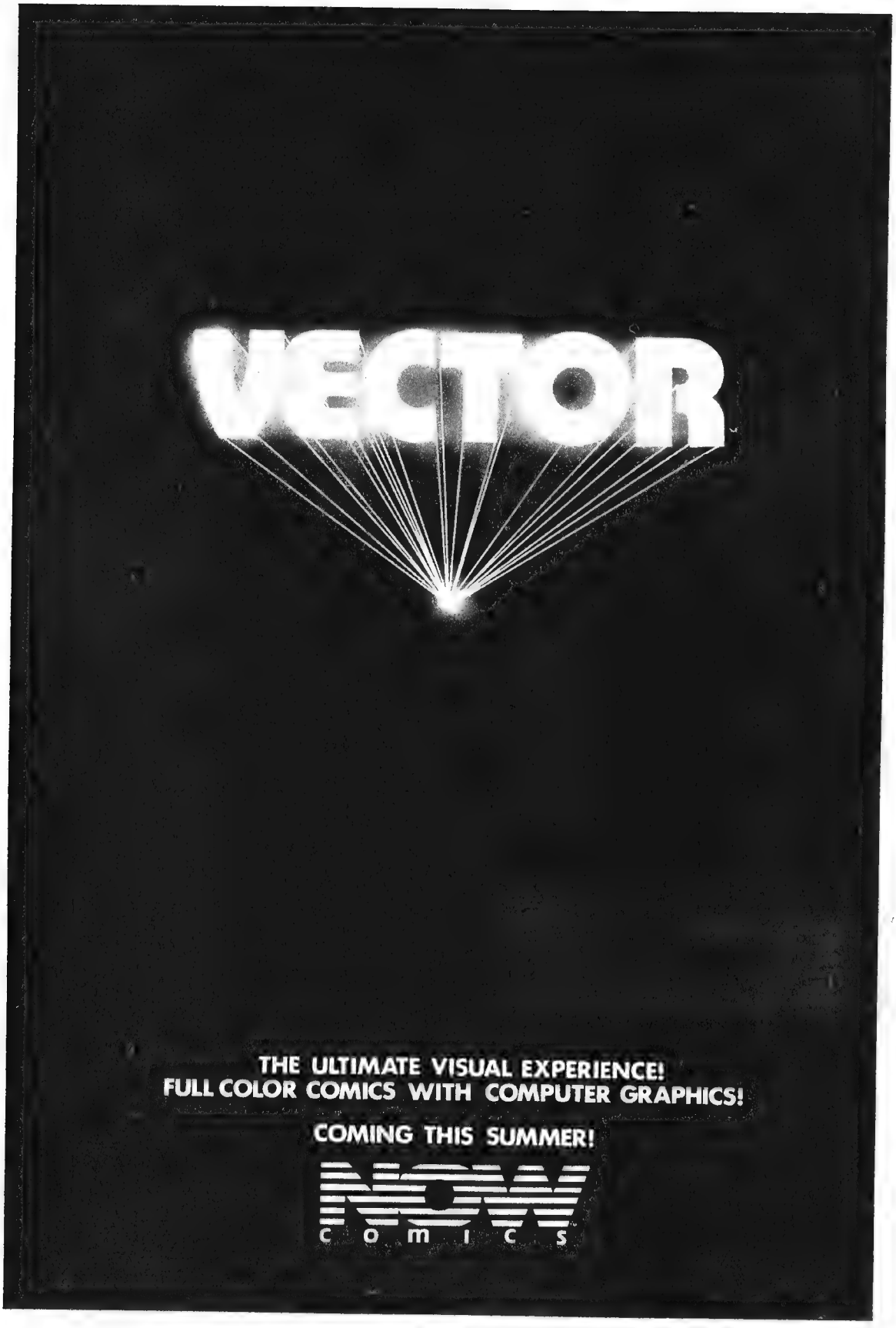
HE DIDN'T. BUT BRUCE WAYNE IS... ALIVE AND WELL.
GLAD TO HEAR THAT, YOU'VE CERTAINLY LEARNED TO DRINK.
REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS, BRUCE? THAT PLAYBOY ROUTINE...

MARK: *We've castrated the Grimms' Fairy Tales.*

FRANK: And we've castrated the American superhero fairy tales, too. But there's a lot more to be done with all this stuff — I've been amazed at what these characters have to offer. Every time I've pulled out one of the established Batman characters — the Joker, Commisioner Gordon, who's an important figure in the series, Selina Kyle, the Catwoman, who makes a brief appearence — I've found each of them so rich in possibilities that I've been delighted. The Joker, in particular, I had to do a great deal of reworking on. I think readers will be surprised that he doesn't smile — not for a while, anyway. And that he's anything but a prankster — he's a purely evil figure.

MARK: *Is he the antithesis of Batman?*




VECTOR
THE ULTIMATE VISUAL EXPERIENCE!
FULL COLOR COMICS WITH COMPUTER GRAPHICS!
COMING THIS SUMMER!
NOW
comics

"Daredevil is smalltime next to Batman."

FRANK: That's an interesting question, because in a way he is. Batman is such a super ego character, and the Joker is such a wild id. But I could say that the Joker and Batman are opposites, I could say that Superman and Batman are opposites — it really depends on the angle you take on it. I *would* say that between Batman and the Joker you have a classic confrontation between order and chaos — the Joker representing chaos.

MARK: *And chaos is everything Batman's tried to control since his world was plunged into chaos as a kid?*

FRANK: Right, right — he's making things make sense.

MARK: *How is Batman different than Daredevil?*

FRANK: Oh, any number of ways — the first of, in scope. Daredevil could never be as big a character as Batman. Daredevil was not a well-conceived character. He was a —

MARK: *Spider-Man clone.*

FRANK: Yeah, he was slapped together with details of other heroes. There *has* been something there that's intrigued me, but it has taken me thirty-odd issues and several years away from the book in order for me to see the kind of hero I think he could be. I'm working on forging that character right now, but he's small time compared to Batman. Batman changes the way people live by his presence!

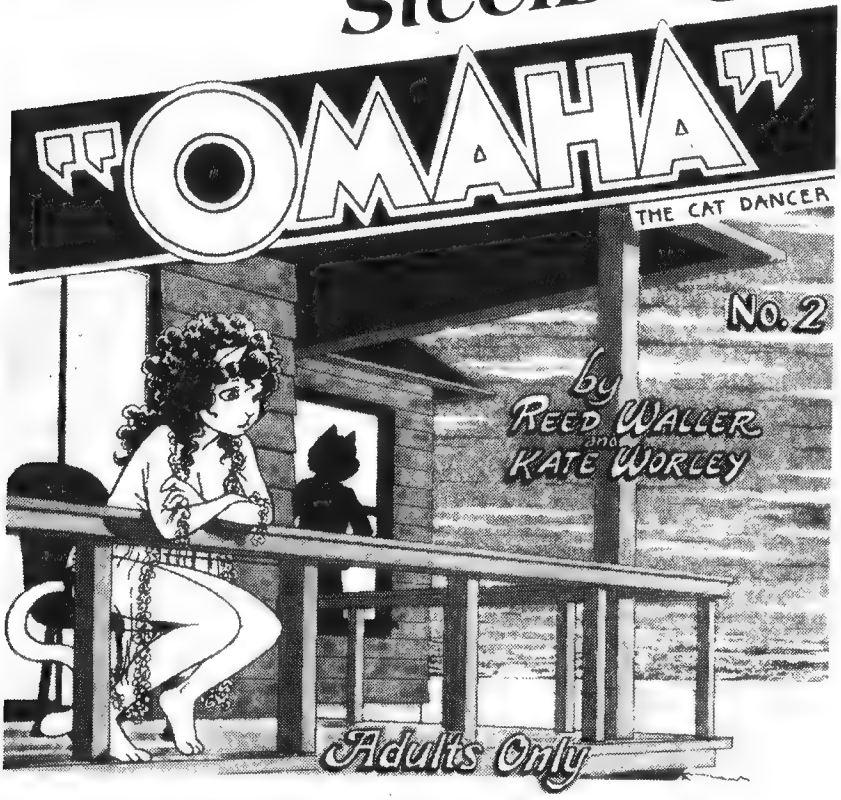
© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

They said he'd be helping the government.

But what if the government is beyond help?

CAPTAIN CONFEDERACY No. 2

Coming in June from SteelDragon Press!



is alive and well . . . and missing.

Available at all fine comic shops

SteelDragon Press

"Alfred is the nastiest son-of-a-bitch!"

MARK: *You mentioned Batman's hardware before...*

FRANK: Yeah, I ended up using a lot more of it, reworking a lot more of it than I expected. Originally, my feeling was much like many other people's — that the hardware was a problem. But again, I found out that there was a real use for a lot of it. I had to gear it all up, though, because he's up against much fiercer crime than he ever was before. The batmobile is now a thirty-foot tank. The country is essentially a war zone, which I don't regard as science fiction. He has a whole range of different vehicles that he uses. His utility belt is redesigned, and I'm very specific about what exactly is in it. His batarangs I redesigned — they're much crueler.

MARK: *Will we see the bat-cave?*

FRANK: Oh — the cave is one of the most important parts of the series!

MARK: *Does he have a grandfather clock again?*

FRANK: As a matter of fact, he does. *(Laughter.)* Although Alfred uses it a little differently than before. He has a helicopter, a motorcycle — he loves that stuff! It's one of the things that was enjoyable to do with him, that he really *loves* fighting crime. During the ten years that he hasn't been Batman he's gotten into racing cars.

MARK: *Who works on all his machinery?*

FRANK: He does, to a great extent. He can't keep his hands off that sort of thing. When he's not being Batman he's being a mechanic — he's terrible at taking care of Wayne Enterprises. He has hosts of accountants, *et cetera*, that do most of the work for him because he keeps neglecting it. The hardware is all the product of his largest division, which is Wayne Electronics, the one he pays the most attention to because he uses a tremendous amount of computer material. For instance, his helmet contains a mechanism that allows him to tap into radio and TV broadcasts and police radios. That's how he knows where crimes are committed. He's very much like the Shadow in that sense — a one-man organization.

MARK: *What about Alfred?*

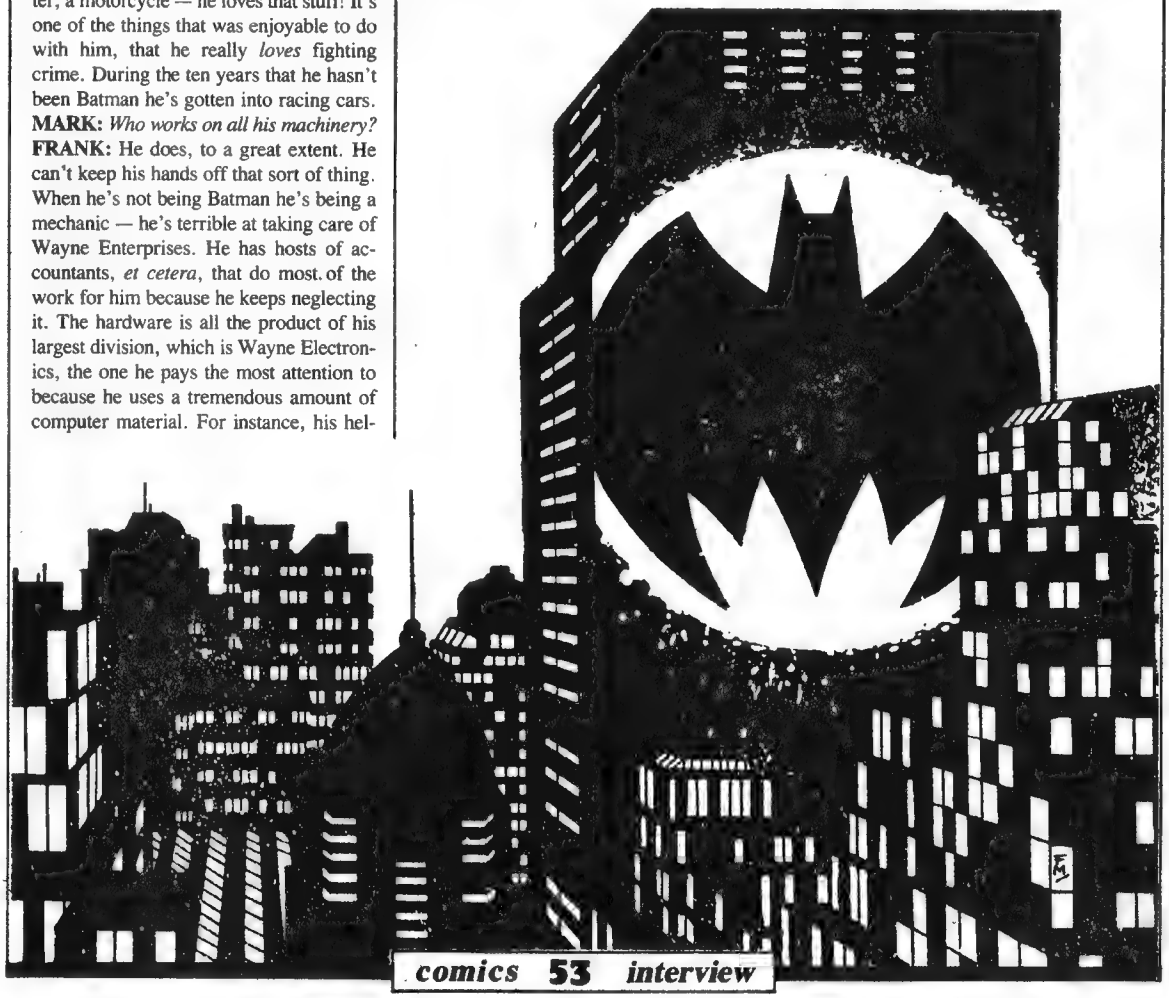
FRANK: Alfred is about ninety-years-old and still his butler, and he's the nastiest son-of-a-bitch around! He's a ball to write — they all are! I mean, these characters are just amazing! Gordon turned out to be a particular pleasure to write. He retires in the course of the series — he's seventy, he's old. It's a mandatory retirement.

MARK: *You've said that he's been covering Batman's ass all along?*

FRANK: Yes, and when the house of cards falls, it falls hard. It has to fall — that's what the story's about — this is my Great American Superhero Story, I'm giving it every single ounce I've got to make it as good as can be.

MARK: *After doing this, won't your next superhero script seem anticlimactic?*

FRANK: If there is one. I don't know what I'm going to do after this. There are the graphic novels for Marvel, certain other things I'm not talking about yet. A certain amount of my time is spent protesting Marvel's abuse of **Kirby** — I think it's horrible. The man should have been honored many years ago, and he's been completely denied by them. I owe **Kirby** tons. So does everybody else working in superhero comics — certainly Marvel does. I don't know if I could stomach working on anything **Kirby** created knowing how badly he's been treated. It's easier to base my Batman on **Jerry Robinson's** and **Dick Sprang's**, knowing that DC has given something back to past creators. As a matter of fact, the strongest presentation of the character to date has come from the Forties. There was something in the art back then that made him huge — it wasn't just his shoulders, big as they were. There was also a sense of joy, grim as he was, there was this sense of joy, just in what he did, that I'm trying to bring back.



© 1986 DC COMICS, INC.

"I'm still making appearances as Robin."

© 1966 National Periodical Publications

"I had third degree burns and scars because I didn't want to ruin the shot."

BURT WARD

Precisely 20 years ago, on Jan. 12, 1966, the nation went Bat-mad. The semi-weekly Batman TV series, starring Adam West, Burt Ward and guest-villains Jill St. John and Frank Gorshin, premiered to soaring ratings. When the show ended three years later, Ward was a star who couldn't get an acting job.

Happily, that's all turned around, with Ward now as busy as he's ever been. His biggest project is A Night with the Stars, a motion picture distribution company which will offer first-run films to schools, clubs and other local organizations around the country. At $3 a head, the organizations may offer their memberships sneak previews of new movies, complete with reaction cards to fill out for the producers' edification. The first ad for the new company produced 53 inquiries from potential franchisees.

Ward's current acting projects include STAR MAGIC (he'll host this occasional series, performing magic with celebrity guests), a game show called TV CLASSICSs (again as host), and a Vietnam film called TUNNEL RATS, to be filmed in the Philippines as soon as, as Ward puts it, "...the smoke clears." And there are still appearances as Robin, the Boy Wonder. He spent the first weekend in February in Indianapolis at an auto show with Adam West and the trusty (and perhaps rusty) Batmobile.

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Burt Ward
Born: 6 July 1946 in Los Angeles
Occupation: Actor and executive.
Marital Status: In August 1985, Ward married Mariana Torchia, daughter of the Austrian actress Maria Perschy.
Hobbies: Chess, travel and karate (he's a black belt in Taekwondo).
Favorite Book: THE PROPHET by Kahlil Gibran.
Favorite Escape: An empty beach on a South Pacific atoll.
Favorite Arch-Enemy: King Tut, a Gotham City Egyptologist played by Victor Buono who, after being struck on the head, believed himself to be a reincarnated tyrant.

DAN HAGEN: *What did you think of the sudden popularity of the Batman series? Did it surprise you?*
BURT WARD: It surprised everybody. We were all completely taken aback.
DAN: *Why was it such a success, do you think?*
BURT: It had a huge appeal. We appealed to kids because of the seriousness of the hero worship and all that stuff. We appealed to teenagers and college kids because of our camp style, and we appealed to adults because of nostalgia.
DAN: *I gather you had to perform some hairy stunts?*

PICK OF THE LITTER.

A NEW MONTHLY COMIC BOOK STARRING

USAGI YOJIMBO
by Stan Sakai

The exploits of a ronin rabbit, as he roams the countryside of medieval Japan in search of adventure...as well as a meal and a place to sleep!

GNUFF
by Freddy Milton

A trio of dragons makes the big move from the country to the city, only to be confronted with politics, anti-dragon bigotry, and household appliances!

BIRTHRIGHT
by Steven Gallacci

Young Prince Anton returns to the planet of his birth to reclaim the throne from the insurgent military government that he believes slew his father and mother!

PLUS: A special guest appearance from **Cutey Bunny** in issue #1, by Joshua Quagmire and Dave Garcia!

PLUS: A story previewing Mike Kazaleh's new comic book, **The Adventures of Captain Jack**, in #2!

NOT TO MENTION: More funny-animal entertainment than has ever before been assembled in a single comic book! Watch out for the Gallacci/Quagmire/Sakai/Luth jam cover – and reserve your copy today!

ON SALE IN FEBRUARY FROM FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

"I used to fight Bruce Lee. He was quick!"

BURT: I was hurt five times in the first show — explosions, dynamite, and all kinds of stuff.

DAN: *Tell us about the experience with the tigers in the first Catwoman episodes.*

BURT: I was hung over these three Bengal tigers. Ten feet about me — in a steel cage! — were the director and the cameraman. The tigers were growling but they didn't do anything more, so the director says to the trainer, "Well, can we hang meat over his head to get the tigers doing something here, jumping at him?" And they did, and the tigers were jumping up in my face.

DAN: *Did they have any clear idea of how high a tiger can jump?*

BURT: Yes. Fifteen feet.

DAN: *And you were hanging at what?*

BURT: Ten feet.

DAN: *Might have cut the show short there.*

BURT: Right. These are the same geniuses in the special effects department who built a breakaway set in the very first show without building a breakaway. You remember the one where Batman breaks into the Riddler's hideout, which is in a subway? They just built a plain set, and they didn't have time to build a breakaway. So the special effects guys set three sticks of dynamite and nearly blew the entire sound stage up. I had two-by-fours landing on my face. It was a real mess.

DAN: *That's incredible. How did they get you to go along with all these things?*

BURT: I was new. This was my first job. One of the scenes was in the same show, where the Riddler shoots me with a dart in the arm and I fall down and he presses a button in the Batmobile and all these fireworks go off. They said it was a one-take thing and nobody could move. Well, here I didn't move and ashes burned through my cape and I had

Photo: Courtesy of 20th Century-Fox Studios

third degree burns and scars on my arm because I didn't want to make any noise and ruin the shot.

DAN: *As I recall from one episode, you once battled Bruce Lee as Kato...*

BURT: Bruce was a friend of mine. We lived in the same apartment building and we used to spar together.

DAN: *What was your impression of him?*

BURT: He was very sharp, very intelligent, very good at the martial arts. He was quick mentally as well as physically. This guy was very fast. To get in there and fight with him, you really had to know what you were doing.

DAN: *My editor ran across a Trivial Pursuit question the other day that puzzled me. It was something along the lines of, "What did the fundamentalists object to about Robin's costume?" The answer was, "His tights." Do you remember any controversy about that?*

BURT: Yes, I do. The Catholic Legion of Decency didn't like the way I fit into my tights. They said I had too much of a bulge...

DAN: *But Batman had tights...*

BURT: Yeah, well, Batman — for whatever reason — didn't have the same bulge that I had. *(Laughter.)* They tried to get me to wear a double pair of underwear or a jockstrap. That didn't help. Anyway, they finally found some quack doctor there at 20th Century-Fox who gave me these pills. They last for two or three hours, and they kind of shrink you up.

DAN: *REALLY?*

BURT: Uh-huh. As a matter of fact, this came out in LOOK magazine. And I got a letter from a 14-year-old kid who said, "I have the same problem you do. All my friends at school laugh at me. Can you please give me the name of the doctor so that I can get some of those pills and reduce this bulge? P.S. My father doesn't know I'm writing."

DAN: *Over the years, there have been objections from fans of the comic book to the effect that the show overdid the parody element. How did you feel about that?*

BURT: Well, like BATMAN executive producer **William Dozier** said, he'd rather be an innovator than an imitator.

DAN: *Have you seen any of the SUPERMAN movies with Chris Reeve?*

BURT: Yes, I have.

DAN: *What did you think about the difference in the approach they took?*

BURT: I think what we did was much more successful and much more entertaining. And I think if we ever did it again, it would be again very entertaining, very strong.

WHAT KIND OF ALIEN IS YOUR NEIGHBOR?

WHAT KIND ARE YOU?

THE SILENT INVASION A Science Fiction Mystery
Coming in April from Renegade Press

"The Catholic Legion of Decency said I

DAN: *Did you ever feel trapped by the role, that you couldn't get other work?*
BURT: Absolutely, and still am to a certain extent.
DAN: *You mean casting directors still say, "Oh, that's that kid who was Robin...?"*
BURT: Yeah — "He can't do anything else." That's what makes it tough, and I've been fortunate to make some progress here.
DAN: *Do you ever see the comics now?*
BURT: I don't read them, but I see them because the kids come up to me and hand me the comics to sign.
DAN: *I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but Robin is now virtually grown up.*
BURT: I know, and that's the reason why both **Adam West** and I could recreate those roles. But for some reason, the producers who were assigned to do a new movie for Batman which they've been talking about for five years — **Peter Guber** and **Jon Peters** — want to do a serious Batman and Robin and don't feel we could do it because people regard us as...
DAN: *The camp Batman and Robin.*
BURT: Yes. I disagree totally. In fact, I'll tell you something. Let's say they had a scene where it's been years and we get back together and the crime is very bad in Gotham City and we make that big decision to go back, right? And we run to the closet and open it up and the dust billows out — you know you'd have people standing on the seats of those theaters screaming and cheering.

These people in their infinite wisdom up there at Warner Communications are of the same mentality as the Lone Ranger people, the people who prevented the Lone Ranger (**Clayton Moore**) from even going out and shaking hands with kids. It was so sad the way they did it, and the American public was so angered that they really taught that company a lesson at the box office. Because the new LONE RANGER picture lost millions.
DAN: *The publicity was terrible for them, because of course the story came out, "This is the corporation that's trying to unmask the Lone Ranger."*
BURT: Everybody was for the underdog, who was **Clayton Moore**. You take that on one hand, which seems to be the same mentality that Warner Brothers is espousing. And you compare that to what Paramount did with STAR TREK. They used the originals. They even had a story that if **Leonard Nimoy** didn't come out in it, they figured they'd lose seven and a half million dollars. They did STAR TREK I, and because they used the real people, they're now working on STAR TREK IV. You'd think that would tell them something, but these guys are real hard-headed.
DAN: *The fact that Robin's now grown up would fit in with you playing him...*

© 1986 National Periodical Publications

had too much of a bulge in my tights!"

© 1966 National Periodical Publications.

BURT: I'm still making appearances playing 15-and-a-half.

DAN: *You've obviously aged gracefully...*

BURT: People still come up to me all the time — I mean this, at every show — and say, "I can't believe this. I saw you when I was going to school, and you haven't changed a bit. What did you do?" I say, "Well, I may be young on the outside, but I'm 95 on the inside."

DAN: *Well, tell me. Here you played a character who, for most of the show, wore a mask. Do people recognize you when you're out on the street?*

BURT: No. That's what really got me aggravated with the industry. Those are the people who typecast me, not the audience out there. They don't recognize me. I had one producer at MGM. This was years ago. My agent tried to get me in to see him. For three weeks, the guy said, "Look, I know Burt, he's a fine actor. But he's Robin." After three weeks of begging, I finally got an interview. I went in and there must have been eight or nine other young guys my age. When it was my turn I walked in and the producer looked up from his paperwork and said, "Oh, excuse me. Would you mind waiting outside? I'm waiting for **Burt Ward** to come in." I said, "Well, I am **Burt Ward**." He said, "I'm sorry! Oh my goodness, how could I have not recognized you!!!" Here's the guy who was claiming that everybody would say I was Robin, and he didn't even recognize me.

DAN: *Was filming the BATMAN movie any different than filming the TV series?*

BURT: There was more location work. The Batcopter was brought in, the Penguin's submarine was brought in, and we were working out on the buoys. It was more fun for me, because I was just a kid.

DAN: *You did that on hiatus, I suppose?*

BURT: Right. If you want to hear a funny thing, the studio kept me very sheltered. In fact, on one of my other hiatuses the following year, when I wanted so much to do a movie, there was a film at 20th Century-Fox, the same studio. And the producer, **Larry Turman**, wanted me to do the movie and Fox still wouldn't let me do it. I was really, really broken-hearted. Every four or five years, I'll run into **Larry Turman** and he'll say, "You know, Burt, I really wanted you for that role." You know what the movie was?

DAN: *No, what?*

BURT: THE GRADUATE.

DAN: *The lead role, the Dustin Hoffman role?*

BURT: Yes.

DAN: *Well, that might have changed the course of your career quite sharply.*

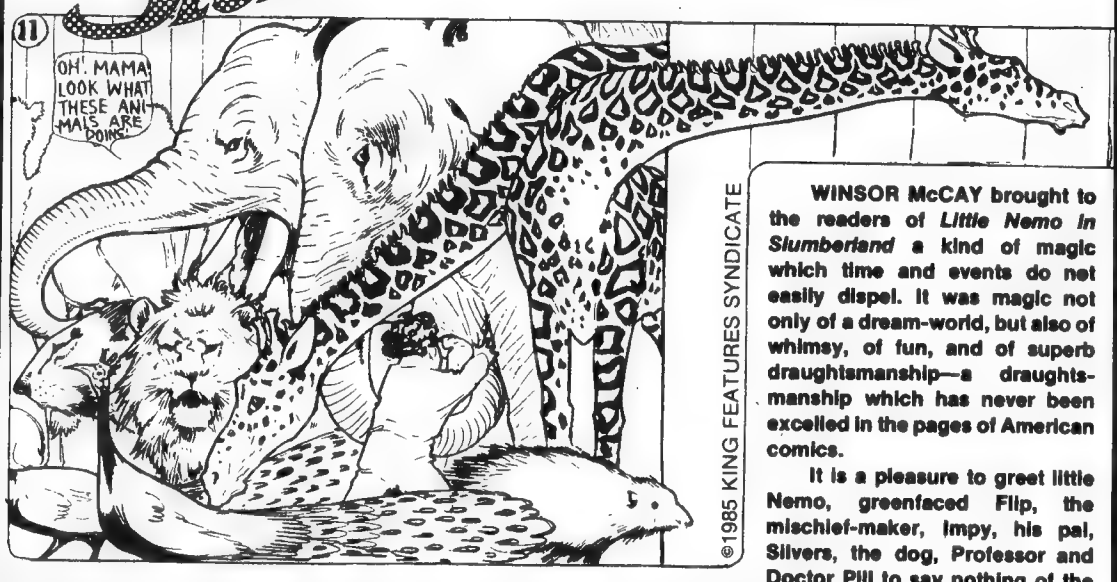
BURT: Tell me about it. *(Laughter)*

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

PRESENTS

LITTLE NEMO

IN SLUMBERLAND



©1985 KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

WINSOR McCAY brought to the readers of *Little Nemo in Slumberland* a kind of magic which time and events do not easily dispel. It was magic not only of a dream-world, but also of whimsy, of fun, and of superb draughtsmanship—a draughtsmanship which has never been excelled in the pages of American comics.

It is a pleasure to greet little Nemo, greenfaced Flip, the mischief-maker, Impy, his pal, Silvers, the dog, Professor and Doctor Pill to say nothing of the Princess and her father, King Morpheus—once more! It is a pleasure for new readers—the stories, the adventure, a collection of pages torn from *the Golden Age* of comics in America.

***Little Nemo in Slumberland* is 72 pages printed on white book stock. A trade paperback with full-color (laser-method) covers.**

A QUALITY BOOK $5.95

— Also Available —

Limited-edition Hardcover $14.95

SEND TO: **BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.** 786 Blackthorne Avenue, El Cajon, CA 92020

Enclose a check or money order for total, plus 75¢ postage and handling per book ordered. CA residents add 6% sales tax. Checks must clear bank prior to shipping.

• = *Available Soon. Reserve your copy now!*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Little Nemo in Slumberland
☐ **Paperback $5.95**
☐ **Hardcover ... $14.95**

☐ ART OF PIERANGELO BOOG	$8.95
☐ THE IGER COMIC KINGDOM	$8.95
• ☐ BENCHLEY, book 1	$5.95
☐ BROOM HILDA, book 1	$5.95
☐ DICK TRACY, book 1	$5.95
☐ DICK TRACY, book 2	$5.95
☐ DICK TRACY, book 3	$5.95
☐ DICK TRACY, book 4	$5.95
☐ GASOLINE ALLEY, book 1	$5.95
☐ LI'L ABNER, book 1	$5.95
☐ ANNIE, book 1	$5.95
☐ ON STAGE, book 1	$5.95
☐ BLONDIE, book 1	$5.95
☐ SMOKEY STOVER, book 1	$5.95
☐ STAR HAWKS, book 1	$5.95
☐ STORIES OF THE WEST, book 1	$5.95
☐ STORIES OF THE WEST, book 2	$5.95
☐ TALES OF THE GREEN BERET, book 1	$5.95
☐ BETTY BOOP, book 1	$5.95
• ☐ KATZENJAMMER KIDS, book 1	$5.95

NEW COMICS

☐ NERVOUS REX #1	$2.00
☐ NERVOUS REX #2	$2.00
☐ NERVOUS REX #3	$2.00
☐ NERVOUS REX #4	$2.00
☐ SHEENA 3-D	$2.00
☐ MERLINREALM 3-D	$2.25
• ☐ 3-D HEROES	$2.25
• ☐ GOLDYN 3-D	$2.25
• ☐ BIZARRE 3-D ZONE	$2.25
• ☐ SALIMBA 3-D #1	$2.50
• ☐ SALIMBA 3-D #2	$2.50

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

BURNED BY BYRNE

Dear Mr. Kraft:

John Byrne DOES NOT own Doctor Doom — and I resent **Byrne**'s plethora of comments in COMICS INTERVIEW #25 implying that he does.

A rampant example is **Byrne**'s statement (page 26), "What most people seem to have forgotten over the years, is that — even *Stan* forgot — Doom is not somebody who would go in and punch it out with The Thing. Doom is somebody who would *build something* that would go in and punch it out with The Thing. Or *brainwash somebody* to go in and punch it out with The Thing."

Stan forgot??? I doubt that **Stan Lee** "forgot" how to write one of his own greatest creations! As for personally confronting and "punching it out" with anyone, COURAGE (unlimited) has always been Doom's noblest attribute; I disagree completely with **Byrne**'s implication of Doom's lack of it. Victor Von Doom has, over the past 23 years, punched, slugged, bashed, zinged and zapped it out with myriad super-beings too numerous to name! In addition to his many bouts with The Thing, a few of his most memorable slugfests include — with Mr. Fantastic (FF #200), The Hulk (#144), Sub-Mariner (SVT-U #4), Thor (#183), Spider-Man (#5), Daredevil (#37), Avengers (#155), Champions (#16), Kagrok (AT #8), The Over-Mind (FF #116) — AND Doom's greatest physical confrontation of all — his "cosmic slugfest" with The Beyonder (SECRET WARS #10).

Just check out that cover of SW #10, **Mr. Byrne** — "bloody but unbowed!" In that issue, Doom indeed punched it out (or zapped it out) with The Beyonder in a personal confrontation that literally cost him an arm and a leg. Not one other character (neither superhero nor supervillain) dared battle The Beyonder on its home planet — ONLY Victor Von Doom!

It is certainly a puzzling inconsistency, therefore, when **Byrne** comments (in a discussion of various writers' portrayals of Doom) on page 21: "For example I thought **Shooter** handled Doom well in the SECRET WARS."

Inconsistencies!!!

"I'll put the words into my mouth, myself," **Byrne** states on page 26, "IF I DIDN'T WRITE IT, it isn't really Doom. I have to take that philosophy. You have to take that philosophy on ANY CHARACTER that you're working with because of the complexity of the Marvel Universe."

Yet in another reference to SECRET WARS, **Byrne** comments on pages 35-36, "I think **Shooter** took an almost impossible task — he wrote the X-MEN as he perceived them — and the FF as he perceived them — and the AVENGERS as he perceived them — and not just carbon copies of the **Claremont/Byrne/Stern** corner of the Universe. The people who love the CHARACTERS are going to say, 'These are the characters; they're not acting out of character — because they don't buy the X-MEN for some particular little quirk of Chris's or buy the FF for some particular little quirk of mine. The majority buy them for the CHARACTERS.'"

So why, then on page 41, does **Byrne** complain bitterly that "when **Shooter** said, 'All the CHARACTERS are available,' everyone (at MARVEL) went nuts — and the one they ALL seized on was DOCTOR DOOM!?"

And — on page 76 **Byrne** comments that the only books he really pays any attention to are the MARVELS and what relates to the Marvel Universe — because, "You know I have to CHECK OUT any time DR. DOOM turns up somewhere."

Just WHO appointed **John Byrne** as "Dr. Doom's keeper?"

Byrne states (page 24) that "there have been *brilliant* Dr. Doom stories and there have been *stupid* Dr. Doom stories."

I agree — and several of **Byrne**'s fall into the latter category! Regarding **Bynre**'s revelation (FF #278) of the true extent of Doom's facial disfigurement from the explosion, itself — if he received only one small scar, then why all those bandages? Why was Doom's entire head and face and eyes — completely covered with bandages??? All the magazines that have ever depicted that scene have portrayed it thusly (including **Byrne**'s own depiction in FF #278.)

Concerning **Byrne**'s comment (page 24) that "Doom turned a corner and turned into somebody else, at some point in the mid-1970s" — I agree — and the corner turned was into greater depth of character development. Many of the most *positive* elements of Doom's intensely individualistic, multi-faceted persona were explored and expressed throughout the '70s; we got some superlative Dr. Doom stories in the '70s —

© 1985 MCG

foremost among them FF #116, ASTONISHING TALES #8 and MARVEL NOVEL SERIES #5: DOOMSDAY. There have been outstanding Dr. Doom stories in the '60s AND in the '70s AND in the '80s. Different facets of Doom's persona have been emphasized or developed during each decade.

I am not one bit surprised by **Byrne**'s revelation that he's composed many of his own fan letters in the letters column of the FF. In fact there is a letter by a "Timothy - last name lost" in FF #286 which I'd almost bet pesos to peanuts is a self-composed **John Byrne** fan letter. It fits **John Byrne**'s ego to a "T".

Your publication of the three panels (page 26) from X-MEN #146, depicting what **Byrne** considers a defamation of Doom's character — was really in very poor taste. There is a whole lot more to Doom's character in that X-MEN trilogy (#145-147) than that single scene of Arcade striking a match on Doom's armor — the act, itself, which Doom ignored (in the **Claremont/Cockrum** perception) as he would have ignored the buzzing of a gnat.

Finally, I derived a hearty chuckle from "**Byrne**'s" comments (page 84): "I'm a Company Man, General; I'm not paid to have opinions. If I was a company exec, I would want people working for me who believed in what I was doing and who supported me 100%."

How about 98%? 99% maybe? (Whew!) 1984 — plus! RUR! No opinions! Was this perhaps a "**John Byrne** robot" uttering those statements (in the spirit of **Asimov**'s laws of robotics) rather than the REAL **John Byrne**?

Regardless of those statements — for someone supposedly WITHOUT OPINIONS, **Byrne** surely has a PLETHORA of them! And what about the articles in COMICS JOURNAL #102 (page 23) and AMAZING HEROES #82 (pages 22-23), which state that (this 100% Marvel Company Man?) **John Byrne** is taking over as writer/artist of SUPERMAN (his favorite character) for DC in 1986 while continuing the FF and HULK for MARVEL? I must admit that SUPERMAN is a character well suited to **Byrne**'s own psyche — particulary in his quest for the Great Apple Pie in the Sky. I guess it's not **Rich Buckler**'s nor **Bill Sienkiewicz**'s nor **Bill Mantlo**'s jobs he's after this time.

John Byrne does not OWN any of these classic characters; they are all a part of our American mythos — or 20th century mythos. This is definitely true regarding Dr. Doom — who is essentially a "universal persona." So let's have as MANY Dr. Doom stories as we can get by as wide a variety of MARVEL writers and artists as possible!

Alazar Templeton
1707 Scenic Drive
Ewing Township, NJ 08628

"WHA HAPPENED!?"

Dear DAK

"Wha Happened!?" Here I am singing the praises of the ever informative, interesting, provocative and always enjoyable COMICS INTERVIEW when you go ahead and skip a month between issues #25 and #26. For awhile you had me wondering if INTERVIEW might possibly become a tri-weekly, with a couple of issues released on top of one another in the summer. What gives?

I was interested in **Marv Wolfman**'s remark with respect to his CRISIS series, "If it's a minor crossover — one or two pages, which is very nice for the book — we ask them 'Do not blurb it as a CRISIS crossover.'" **Alan Gold** and a few others may beg to differ but I fail to see how the red skies in BLUE DEVIL #17 qualifies it as a legitimate CRISIS tie-in. It was certainly blurbed as such though! Now, I'm a fan of BLUE DEVIL and will buy it regardless, but I wonder how many casual fans were hoodwinked into thinking that issue somehow had significant story content connected with the earth-shaking events in CRISIS?

By the way, Marv and **George Perez**, I just have to congratulate you for pulling off one of publishing's truly epic transformations. To create an exciting entertaining, important series while eleminating the confusion of all those parallel universes must go down as a

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

Interviews are always the most interesting feature of any comics magazine — you probably flip to them first, yourself. Now! At last! A high-quality monthly magazine that interviews today's top talents, yesterday's legendary greats, and all the other people involved in every aspect of comics!

FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.
Suite 301
234 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y., 10001

☐ Please start my subscription to *COMICS INTERVIEW* with #_____.
$24 for 12 issues. (Foreign: $30 for 12)

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY_____
STATE_____ ZIP_____

- A FUN-FILLED, INFORMAL MAGAZINE ABOUT THE COMICS FIELD!
- INTERVIEWS *WITH* THE PROS, *BY* THE PROS!
- THE KIND OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES EXCLUSIVES ONLY AN *INDUSTRY INSIDER* CAN BRING YOU!

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE!

major milestone in comics history. DC I salute you.

Gary Kimber
80 Searle Ave.
Downsview, Ont., Canada
M3H 4A5

Gary, you're one of the first to notice what we were up to this past summer! No, your eyes didn't deceive you — we were, indeed, hitting the racks on an unofficial bi-weekly schedule during July and August. Which is why we skipped a month and took a much-needed vacation after the mammoth issue #25!

— DAK

TITANS OF TURTLE–TUDE

Dear DAK:

I read COMICS INTERVIEW #27 the other night and had to write to tell ya' that I really enjoyed the interview with the wildmen from Sharon, CT. I'm talking about **Kevin Eastman** and **Peter Laird**.

It was interesting to read how they met each other and how they do a story. So many times interviews drone over the technical movements of making a comic and never really hit on the personality of the person being interviewed. This was not the case with the interview with **Eastman** and **Laird**. After I read the interview I felt that I kinda' knew these two guys. I guess my hat should go off to **Lamar Waldron** for doing a good job.

Stay outta' trouble.

Beau Smith
Comicast, Inc.
711 6th Street West
Huntington, WV 25704

TITANS OF TURTLE-TUDE, II

DAK:

Loved #27.

Peter Laird has got to be one of the nicest guys in the industry. And **Kevin Eastman**'s not too shabby, either. Until their homes look like Uncle Scrooge's Vault, I wish them ever greater success. Nexus and Magnus, *Salud!* Here's our check for another year of COMICS INTERVIEW!

Monica Sharp
2422 E. Verde School
Holtville, CA 92250

Left: Peter Laird, Right: Kevin Eastman, together with their favorite reading material.

TITANS OF TURTLE-TUDE, TOO!

Dear Dave Kraft,

I just had to write to you to tell you how much I enjoyed your INTERVIEW #27 with **Eastman & Laird**. It told a few facts that I didn't already know about them, such as that it was a 50/50 collaboration, and how they met each other.

I have been collecting COMICS INTERVIEW since issue #22 and have enjoyed everyone. I have also got some good back issues. Keep up the good work!

Dave Cosway
Box 1813
Port Perry, Ont
Canada
L0B 1N0

SINGER vs. SODARO REFEREED

Dear DAK:

Let me preface my letter with my congratulations on publishing a near-perfect comics mag (if nothing is truly perfect, yours is perhaps the closest).

Yet, my comments have nothing to do with your magazine, per se, but with a "war of words" as it were, that seems to have boiled over into your letters pages. It seems that Misters **Sodaro** and **Singer** have now managed to bring their dispute into your publication as well (I suppose COMICS FEATURE and AMAZING HEROES cannot be far behind). As a semi-interested, but non-involved observer, (read: fan) I read all about this silliness in both CBG and the JOURNAL. And let me tell you, I've seen it all before.

Singer accuses **Sodaro** of something; **Sodaro** gets angry and threatens to sue; **Singer** is forced to apologize; **Singer** gives an interview to the press with (apparently) bogus information; **Singer** then responds to the response. I suppose we are now in for a responding response from **Sodaro**. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of the fact that **Singer acuses Sodaro** of having an "improper fixation," it was **Singer** who took the first shot, with his accusations in the JOURNAL. Ah, well.

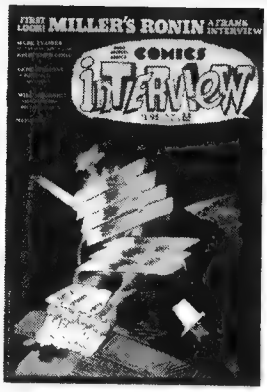
As a parting shot, I would like to note that, from where I sit, **Sodaro** — as a member of the fan press — has no ax to grind, while it would be in **Singer**'s best interest — as a fledgling publisher already on shaky grounds with a law suit pending — to have **Sodaro** dismissed as a crank. Unfortunately, it has merely achieved the opposite effect. **Sodaro**'s letters have seemed intelligent, reasonable, and well-thought-out. **Singer**'s on the other hand, seem to be of the whining, simpering, fan-type. **Singer** is a real pip, he complains of "smear" letters, and yet fails to notice that he is writing one. He wants to read a mag that offers "uplifting interviews", and his was probably the most self-serving pile of drivel I've ever read.

Perhaps **Sodaro** was right when he said that comics have a bad enough image without clowns like **Singer** running around.

R.J. Michaels
(Address Withheld)

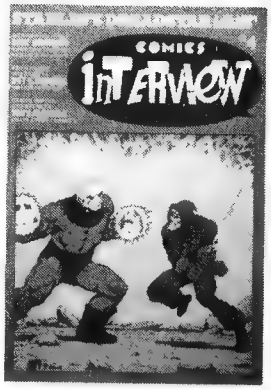
Order any 2 for $5 — or any 5 for $10.

#1-$3.00 **Keith Giffen** on the making of THE OMEGA MEN — **Steve Gerber** speaks out on comics — X-MEN inker **Terry Austin** talks — Marvel's top man, **Jim Galton**, tells all — and much more in this premiere issue!



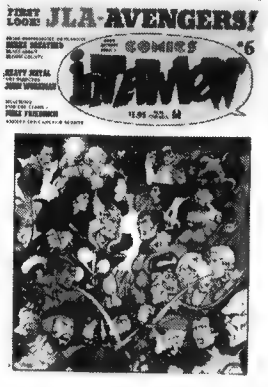
#2-$3.00 **Miller** raps about RONIN — **Mark Evanier** shares secrets of **Kirby's** NEW GODS — **Steve Gerber** asks **Will Meugniot** about DNAGENTS — **Gene Simmons** of KISS on comics — more! Cover by **Frank Miller.**

#3-$3.00 **Don McGregor** & **Craig Russell** on KILLRAVEN — Origins of NEW TEEN TITANS told by **Marv Wolfman** — **Howard Chaykin** on AMERICAN FLAGG — French comics by **Neal Adams** — Cover by **Russell.**

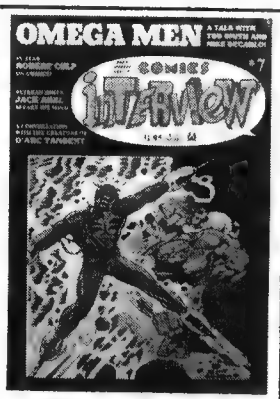


#4-$3.00 **Starlin** speaks about **WARLOCK, CAPTAIN MARVEL & DREADSTAR — DC's Dick Giordano**, part 1 — from **Foster** to **Frazetta**, the last **Roy G. Krenkel** interview — Cover by **Starlin.**

#5-$3.00 **Wendy & Richard Pini** — inside ELFQUEST, part 1 — **Stan Lee**, straight from the shoulder — DC's **Dick Giordano** part 2 — Origins of COMICO. Cover by **Wendy Pini.**

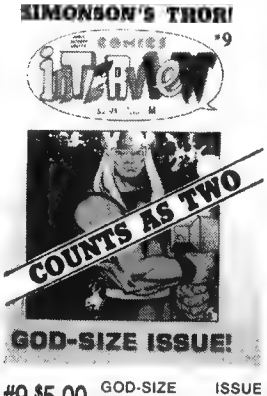


#6-$3.00 **George Perez** & **Roy Thomas** tell all about JLA/AVENGERS feud — inside ELFQUEST, part 2 — **Berke Breathed** blabs about BLOOM COUNTY — more! Awesome cover by **Perez!**

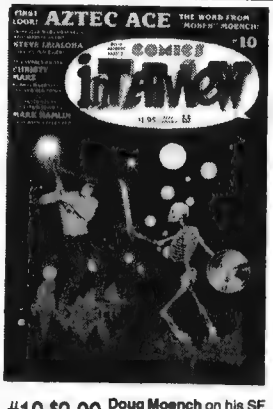


#7-$3.00 Artist **Tod Smith** — inker **Mike DeCarlo**, too — D'ARC TANGENT — TV star **Robert Culp** talks about comics — Marvel artist **Jack Abel** OMEGA MEN cover by **Smith & DeCarlo!**

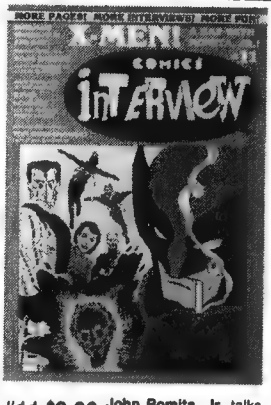
#8-$3.00 **Mike Baron** and **Steve Grant** discuss NEXUS, WHISPER and BADGER — **Bill Griffith** talks about ZIPPY THE PINHEAD — **Richard Burton** on British comics — plus more! Cover by **Steve Rude.**



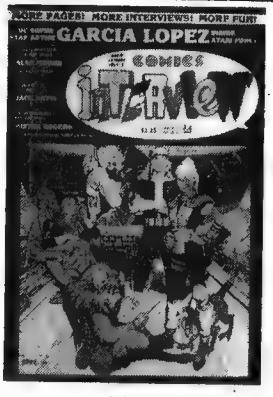
#9-$5.00 GOD-SIZE ISSUE **Walt Simonson**, the man and his art — grand master **Joe Kubert** gabs — A walk down memory lane with comics giant **Gardner Fox** — much, much more!! THOR cover by **Simonson.**



#10-$3.00 **Doug Moench** on his SF series — from **Starlin** to STAR WARS, a wacky interview with **Steve Leialoha** — **Christy Marx** on women, sex and RED SONJA — more! ACE cover by **Hernandez & Yeates.**



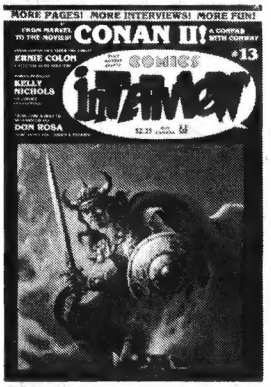
#11-$3.00 **John Romita, Jr.** talks about Marvel from IRON MAN to X-MEN — **Doug Moench** (part two) on his stormy career and the state of comics — inside Pacific Comics — more! X-MEN cover by **Romita!**



#12-$3.00 DC artist **Jose Luis Garcia Lopez** (TEEN TITANS, ATARI FORCE) — EC artist **Jack Davis** — TV's **Mr. Rogers** — star scripter **Alan Moore** talks about superheroes — **Louise Simonson** — more!

Send to: Fictioneer Books Ltd. 234 Fifth Avenue Suite 301 New York 10001

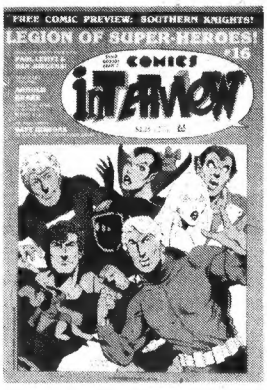
Order any 2 for $5 — or any 5 for $10.



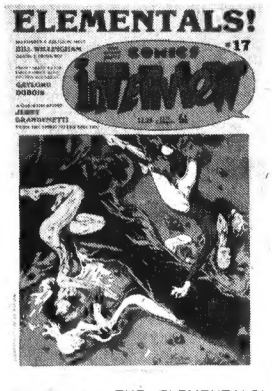
#13-$3.00 **Gerry Conway & Roy Thomas** sound off on scripting movies (Conan, Fire & Ice) and comics — a two-fisted talk with outspoken artist **Ernie Colon** — porn star **Kelly Nichols** — **Don Rosa** — more!

#14-$3.00 **Jim Shooter** talks about SECRET WARS! **Gary Groth** of COMICS JOURNAL! Scripter **Steve Englehart** sounds off on SILVER SURFER and other surprises! SECRET WARS cover by **Mike Zeck!**

#15-$3.00 Co-creators **John Ostrander & Tim Truman** on GRIMJACK! VOID INDIGO artist **Val Mayerik! Richard Pini & Colleen Doran** on A DISTANT SOIL! Great cover by **Truman!**

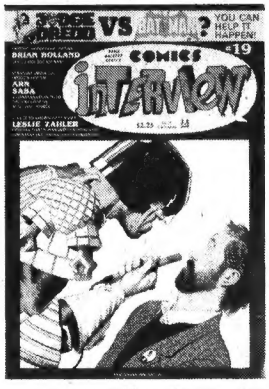


#16-$3.00 THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES! Writer — and DC Vice President — **Paul Levitz,** and artist **Dan Jurgens** — DOOM PATROL creator & original X-MEN writer **Arnold Drake** rattles skeletons at DC!

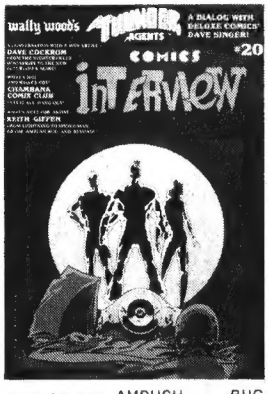


#17-$3.00 THE ELEMENTALS! Creator **Bill Willingham** talks about this super-group! **Jerry Grandenetti** his years with **Will Eisner!** — Golden Age great **Gaylord DuBois.** Cover by **Bill Willingham**

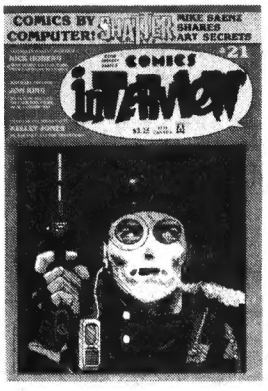
#18-$3.00 ZOT! writer/artist **Scott McCloud!** A rap with original CAPTAIN MARVEL writer & Golden Age great **Rod Reed** — HEAVY METAL artist **Arthur Suydam** — Marvel's **Carol Kalish!**



#19-$3.00 British artist **Brian Bolland** breaks the silence about the secret BATMAN VERSUS JUDGE DREDD project he and **Alan Moore** have been working on! COMIC BUYERS GUIDE's **Don & Maggie**.



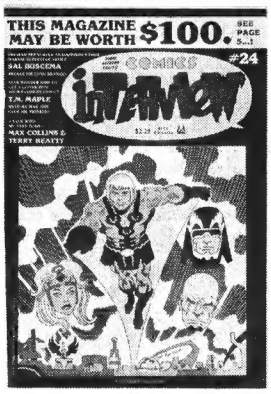
#20-$3.00 AMBUSH BUG alumnus **Keith Giffen** and X-MEN artist **Dave Cockrum** — publisher **Dave Singer** about the T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS — news of the NIGHTCRAWLER mini-series



#21-$3.00 SHATTER was created completely on computer — artist **Michael Saenz** tells how you can do computer comics! **Kelley Jones** — on Marvel's MICRONAUTS! **Rick Hoberg** about drawing THE BATMAN!

#22-$3.00 Marvel Destroys the **Fred Hembeck** Universe. . .er. . . something like that — Marvel artist **Tom Yeates** talks about TIMESPIRITS — and celebrated British writer **Ramsey Campbell** on comics!

#23-$3.00 The MYTH-ADVENTURES of fan favorite **Phil Foglio!** Artist **Neil Vokes** of Comico's ROBOTECH/MACROSS — inside story of Japanese comics, American style. Plus a conversation with **Cat Yronwode!**



#24-$3.00 **Sal Buscema** breaks his long silence to talk all about the early days at Marvel — Writer **Max Collins** and artist **Terry Beatty** talk about MS. TREE! DC's **Karen Berger** on SWAMP THING. **T. M. Maple**, too.

Send to: Fictioneer Books Ltd. 234 Fifth Avenue Suite 301 New York 10001

GULACY & McGREGOR

A shotgun blast of fiery, explosive fiction by DON McGREGOR — featuring **Dragonflame**, a savage ghetto guerilla dealing out brutal justice to those beyond the reach of the law! Trade paperback with 7 sensational b & w PAUL GULACY illustrations.

$7.00
plus $1.00 postage

P. CRAIG RUSSELL

Five science fiction and fantasy stories by JACK LONDON. Clothbound hardcover with 5 b & w interior illustrations and full-color fold-out drawing, plus title and contents page designs, many interior designs,experimental end paper art and color dustjacket design by **Killraven** and **Elric** artist P. CRAIG RUSSELL.

$8.50
plus $1.00 postage
FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.
Suite 301 234 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10001

MERCENARY MAPLE

Dear David,

It was a double-barelled treat to see #'s 27 and 28 on the shelf side-by-side. (Also a double barelled shot to my wallet. $5.75! Ouch! Did it complain! But I'm used to its constant wailing. Sort of. And anyway, everyone knows that wallets have very poor artistic judgement. I mean, *my* wallet's favourite piece of art is the picture of the Queen on the twenty dollar bill!)

For me, the most interesting piece was the interview in #27 with **Peter B. Gillis** by **Peter Sanderson**. I always knew that I loved a lot of those earlier Marvel one-shots and fill-ins by *one* of the famous Peters and now it is firmly fixed in my mind that they were by **Peter Gillis**. No, it was **Sanderson**. No, no, it *was* **Gillis**! (Right?) And by the way, I think it was really brilliant the way he developed that web fluid! Oh, that was Peter **Parker**, wasn't it? Or was it **David Peter**, um, **Peter David**...? (That's what I like about your mag, Tom, um, David, it's so informative!)

I was thrilled to read **Gillis**' statement that the difference between a professional and an amateur in comics is that the professional likes the work of **Steve Ditko**. Well, I like the work of **Steve Ditko** (honestly), so when do I start getting paid? I could really use the money, since the post office keeps bugging me to pay what I owe them for postage.

But seriously, I think that it's a shame that a wider variety of artistic styles is not generally appreciated in comics today. Why, the news that some people consider **Keith Giffen** to be a liability in terms of market appeal is a surprising turnaround from only a couple of years ago. I'll admit that not all of his "new style" work has hit the mark with me, but I've admired his attempts at experimentation and sometimes he turns in a spectacularly appropriate job with real power, eg. ACTION COMICS #577. At least, that's what I think.

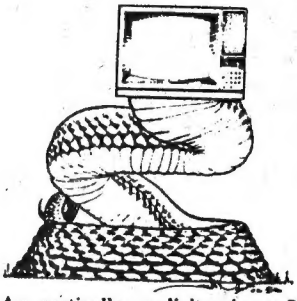
The **Eastman & Laird** interview was also interesting — and it even inspired me! What with the success of TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES and the coming of the ADOLESCENT RADIOACTIVE BLACK BELT HAMSTERS, I thought it was time for me to cash in on the trend! How does HIGH-SCHOOL HYBRID HEAVY-HANDED HIPPOPOTTAMI strike you?

"T.M. Maple"
Box 1272, Station B
Weston, ONT M9L2R9

Let me put it this way, "T.M." — 'nuff said.

— DAK

SIMONSON & McGREGOR



An erotically explicit science-fiction odyssey by DON McGREGOR. Starring one of the most remarkable heroines in SF. **Killraven** was *never* like this! Bonus: a back-up feature on **DETECTIVES, INC.** With artwork by MARSHALL ROGERS. Trade paperback with full-color cover painting by WALT SIMONSON.

$10.00
postpaid

TIM KIRK

15 witty and whimsical fantasies by L. FRANK BAUM, author of the wonderful **Wizard of Oz** stories. Clothbound hardcover with b & w illustrations and dust jacket drawing by Hugo-Award winning SF artist TIM KIRK.

$8.50
plus $1.00 postage
FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.
Suite 301 234 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10001

NEXT ISSUE: SWAMP THING: DEAD OR ALIVE?! The inside story — straight from artist STEVE BISSETTE — along with unpublished art and a preview of his new Marvel CLOAK & DAGGER project! Bonus: portfolio of SWAMP THING art by a surprising array of illustrators — including *Japanese* Swamp Thing art! Also: Science Fiction Hugo Award-winner ALFRED BESTER tells of his start scripting the Golden Age Green Lantern!

GEPPI'S COMIC WORLD

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE
1720-C Belmont Ave.
Baltimore, Md. 21207
(301) 281-1144

VISA

MASTER CARD

EXPIRATION DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

APT.# CITY

STATE ZIP

HOME PHONE

WORK PHONE

I UNDERSTAND THAT MY SUBSCRIPTION BEGINS WITH THE NEXT AVAILABLE ISSUE OF EACH TITLE THAT I HAVE SELECTED.

(Signature)

(Parent's Signature, if under 18)

BACK-ISSUE CATALOG AVAILABLE-OVER 2 MILLION BOOKS IN STOCK. WATCH FOR OUR FALL 1985 CATALOG UPDATE.

HOW TO ORDER

1 - Put in, next to each title you want to receive, the number of copies you want to receive.(This will now be your standing order) 2 - Count the total number of books and put that number in the box below. 3 - Now see what plan that number of books fits into and check off that plan. 4 - If you are under Plan A, B or C, then return this entire form with the correct amount of deposit for the plan you are under to :GEPPI'S SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE. If you have enough books for Plan D, and you choose that plan, then just send the order form to us and we will inform you of the amount you need to send us in order to become prepaid. NOTE : Changes in your order will be made ONLY upon written notification.

TOTAL NUMBER BOOKS

PLAN "A" - 15 to 39 BOOKS
$10.00 DEPOSIT
SHIPPED MONTHLY
10% DISCOUNT
FREE PLASTIC BAG FOR EACH COMIC
YOU PAY SHIPPING CHARGES

PLAN "B" - 40 to 69 BOOKS
$20.00 DEPOSIT
SHIPPED TWICE A MONTH
10% DISCOUNT
FREE PLASTIC BAG FOR EACH COMIC
YOU PAY SHIPPING CHARGES

PLAN "C" - 70 OR MORE BOOKS
$30.00 DEPOSIT
SHIPPED WEEKLY
10% DISCOUNT
FREE PLASTIC BAG FOR EACH COMIC
YOU PAY SHIPPING CHARGES

PLAN "D" - PREPAID
40 OR MORE BOOKS
SHIPPED TWICE A MONTH
10% DISCOUNT
FREE PLASTIC BAG FOR EACH COMIC
WE PAY SHIPPING

A SUM EQUAL TO OR EXCEEDING THE AMOUNT OF EACH ORDER TO BE SHIPPED, MUST BE RECEIVED BY US BEFORE SHIPMENT IS RELEASED.

MARVEL COMICS
- ALPHA FLIGHT
- AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
- AVENGERS
- CAPT. AMERICA
- CLOAK & DAGGER
- CONAN
- CONAN THE KING
- DAKOTA NORTH
- DAREDEVIL
- DAZZLER
- DEFENDERS, NEW (X-FAXTOR)
- DR. STRANGE
- DR. WHO
- ETERNALS
- FANTASTIC FOUR
- GI JOE
- GROO THE WANDERER
- HAWKEYE & THE WEST COAST AVENGERS
- HERO
- INCREDIBLE HULK
- INDIANA JONES
- IRONMAN
- KULL
- MARVEL AGE (NEWS)
- MARVEL FANFARE
- MARVEL INDEX
- MARVEL TALES
- MICRONAUTS
- MOON KNIGHT
- NEW MUTANTS
- NICK FURY VS. SHIELD
- PETER PARKER
- POWERMAN & IRONFIST
- POWER PACK
- RED SONJA
- ROM: SPACE KNIGHT
- SECRET WARS II
- STAR WARS
- THING
- THOR
- TRANSFORMERS
- VISION & SCARLET WITCH
- WEB OF SPIDER-MAN
- X-MEN

MARVEL STAR COMICS
- CRISTY
- EWOKS
- FRAGGLE ROCK
- HEATHCLIFF
- MUPPET BABIES
- PETER PORKER
- PLANET TERRY
- ROYAL ROY
- STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE
- WALLY THE WIZARD

MARVEL MAGAZINES
- EPIC ILLUSTRATED
- SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN

EPIC
- ALIEN LEGION
- BOZZ CHRONICLES
- DREADSTAR
- ELFQUEST

DC COMICS
- ACTION
- ALL-STAR SQUADRON
- AMETHYST
- ARAK
- ARION
- ATARI FORCE
- BATMAN
- BATMAN & OUTSIDERS
- BLUE DEVIL
- CRISIS/INFINITE EARTHS
- DC CHALLENGE
- DC PRESENTS
- DETECTIVE
- ELECTRIC WARRIOR
- FLASH
- FURY OF FIRESTORM
- GI COMBAT
- GREEN LANTERN
- INFINITY, INC.
- JUSTICE LEAGUE
- LEGION SUPERHEROES-BAXTER
- 'MAZING MAN
- NEW TEEN TITANS-BAXTER
- OMEGA MEN
- SECRET ORIGINS
- SGT. ROCK
- STAR TREK
- SUPERMAN
- SWAMP THING
- TALENT SHOWCASE
- TALES OF THE LEGION
- TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS
- V
- VIGILANTE
- WARLORD
- WHO'S WHO
- WONDER WOMAN
- WORLD'S FINEST

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM
- CEREBUS

ARCHIE COMICS
- ALL HUMOR TITLES

EAGLE COMICS
- EAGLE WEEKLY (UK)
- JUDGE DREDD
- 2000 A.D.WEEKLY (UK)

ECLIPSE
- AZTEC ACE
- DNAGENTS
- ZOT

FIRST
- AMERICAN FLAGG
- BADGER
- E-MAN
- GRIMJACK
- JON SABLE
- NEXUS
- STARSLAYER

FANZINES/MAGAZINES
- AMAZING HEROES
- COMICS COLLECTOR
- COMICS INTERVIEW
- COMICS JOURNAL
- COMICS REVIEW
- DR. WHO MONTHLY
- FANGORIA
- LOCUS (SF NEWS)
- SF MOVIELAND
- STARBURST
- STARLOG

CONTINUING PAPERBACKS
- DR.WHO

THE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS GRAPHIC NOVEL

ALL ART BY JACKSON (BUTCH) GUICE
ARTIST OF MARVEL'S X-FACTOR!

"One of the best super-group comics being published today--certainly one of the top five."
--Don Thompson
COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE

FULL COLOR COVER by JACKSON GUICE!

But that's not all. This high-quality collector's edition includes pin-ups and extras about the #1 SUPER TEAM of the South

Superior reproduction on fine quality, heavy grade paper stock

A fullsize graphic novel you can display proudly on your shelves alongside other fine Marvel, DC and First Graphic Novels

The original SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #1 (called THE CRUSADERS) currently sells for upwards of $10.--*if* you can find it. Now the first two *novel-length* hard-to-find black-and-white issues are collected in one graphic novel!

(c) 1986 The Guild/Fictioneer Books Ltd.

SHIPPING IN SPRING FOR SUMMER SALES & CONVENTIONS!

ALL FOR ONLY $4.95

(Canada: $6.25)

A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD. • 234 FIFTH AVE. • SUITE 301-G • NEW YORK, NY 10001